

polaroid angel

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by [orphan_account](#)

Summary

george is a sought-after model with his pale skin and dainty figure.
dream is a wealthy upcoming photographer with a special eye for details.

major content warning;
includes smut and other sexual themes

.*~+ introduction

☺️💕💕💕☺️

polaroid angel - dreamnotfound

george is a sought-after model with his pale skin and dainty figure,

dream is a wealthy upcoming photographer with a special eye for details.

—————♡.*~+—————

disclaimer:

this book will include graphic depictions of sex and nudity.

it is an important part of the storyline, and can not be skipped.

do not read if you don't like it.

it will also deal with heavy topics such as:

- 💧 addiction
- 💧 mental illness
- 💧 drugs / alcohol
- 💧 bdsm
- 💧 mentions of abuse

as i usually say, no warnings in the chapters themselves.

probably not even for smut this time,

cause it will be mentioned so much and frankly i'm too lazy.

☆.*~+>————— ♡~+—————.*~+☆

i said i wouldn't write more long books, but here we are. i'm in a very dark place right now, and even though writing is boring and extremely time consuming it's a distraction nonetheless. on top of that i absolutely love reading you guys' comments. they make me feel like i have a purpose <3

drink water. stay safe.

// claudia <3

☺️💕💕💕☺️

★✎⁺ *prologue*

"mr. davidson?"

i feel a tap on my shoulder just as i'm about to enter the elevator.

"yeah?"

it's my boss. he's got a cup of coffee in hand as usual, glasses hanging from the collar of his shirt. "you'll have to excuse me," he starts, clearing his throat, "i know your shift has ended and i'm sure you're eager to go home, but i have a very special offer for you."

i furrow my eyebrows, observing his unusually enthusiastic expression. mr. herrera is in his mid-30s but despite that he's got the youthful look of a teenager. jet black hair, always nicely combed and greased, sporting a casually formal style of clothing, while staying just within the limits of the company's dress code. he also hates when you refer to him by his last name. as he would've put it himself, "just say carlos, for god's sake."

"and why should i pick up on it?" i question.

"well, there's a new photographer here right now. a freelancer, but he's a rising star. i've seen his work myself, and trust me, he's got real potential. he requested a shoot with someone special, and i immediately thought of you. you're high in demand already, and this could be a huge boost for you."

"so you want me to go do it right now?"

"exactly! this could be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity!" he explains, almost spilling his steaming hot coffee.

"okay.. nude or-"

"yeah, i think he wants to do a nude."

it's four already. technically i'm free to go home and relax for the rest of the evening, but if carlos is so insisting...

"alright, i'll go check it out," i shrug to his delight.

"great! i have a feeling you two will work really well together," he smiles, "he's down on thirty, in room two. the name is dream."

"dream? what kinda name is that?"

"i don't know, but that's what he uses. maybe for artistic reasons."

i hesitantly nod, turning around to be on my way.

"thank you carlos."

he waves goodbye to me as i enter the elevator, picking up his phone to answer a call when the doors close.

dream. mysterious, and... dreamy. i can work with that.

the number on the digital display drops dramatically as i descend. my reflection in the mirror has honestly seen better days. why would they even put up a huge mirror in the elevator of all places? it's almost like they want to make you self-conscious. i feel like my eyebags are visible and my skin is flushed despite the makeup that was caked on my face this morning. it's always wearing off towards the end of the day, and that's when i realize how trash i really look.

outsiders would probably disagree and tell me that i'm gorgeous, that my skin is flawless and that they could only dream of having a body like mine, but i've got a hard time seeing that. working in this industry makes you picky, and insecure. one little red spot could ruin an entire day of shoots, and a scar an entire career. it's stressful, to put it lightly.

my thoughts dissipate as a robotic voice informs me that i've now reached floor thirty. i step out into the busy hallway, tiredly searching for room two. it's hidden behind a group of large potted plants. i never understood this company's obsession with potted plants, but i guess i can't complain. they keep the air clean.

i straighten my tie and fix my dress shirt. can't look like a mess when i greet a new photographer.

having to wear a tie every single day is such a pain in the ass. i hate it. i wish i could just wear skirts to work instead, like i do in my free time. they make me feel pretty for once. i've spoken to carlos about it, and he said he'd love to let me do that, but there are people working over him. he can't change the dress code. it sucks honestly, but i pull through.

the door to the room is slightly open when i enter. inside, a white backdrop has already been set up, and the camera stands ready on its tripod. nothing out of the ordinary for me. the bright lights make me flinch as i walk past them to get to the back room. i shouldn't have agreed to this. it's too late, i'm too tired. i'll look bad in all the photos.

just as i'm about to reach for the doorhandle said door swings open, and out comes a man who must be at least 5 inches taller than me.

"oh, you're here!" he says, offering his hand for me to shake. it's slightly tanned, and a lot bigger than mine, with a firm, confident grip. his veins are very noticeable.

"george," i greet, my voice way quieter than i intended it to be.

"dream," the man responds, smiling to show off his perfect pearly whites.

to say that dream is tall would be an understatement. or maybe he just feels really big because i'm so scrawny in comparison. he's got beautiful blond hair that falls to his eyebrows in curls. his jawline is sharp, and his face is flawlessly chiseled. almond shaped eyes stare back at me, serious but with a lurking kindness hidden within. the white button-up he's wearing hugs his body nicely. i can tell he's pretty muscular.

he should be a model, not a photographer. he's got everything the agencies want.

"it's a pleasure to meet you george, and i'm really happy to have gotten this opportunity to work with you."

"nice to meet you too," i reply shyly, "if you don't mind me asking, what's your real name?"

"i go by dream. that's all you have to know for now. you can go in and undress while i finish setting everything up, alright?"

"sure."

he walks off to fix whatever needs fixing, and i slip into the changing room.

dream. okay. just as mysterious as the name suggests. this will for sure be interesting.

dream is cleaning the lens when i walk out of the changing room, completely naked as requested. i remember how anxious i was in the beginning of my career, during the first nude photoshoots i ever did. i would shuffle out awkwardly with my hands covering my junk, like my pictures weren't gonna be seen by publishers anyway. now i can look back on those good old times and laugh. my confidence has skyrocketed since then, and nowadays i'm rather indifferent about showing every part of myself to complete strangers.

what surprises me the most this time instead, is the lack of props. usually photographers who come here like to bring props, either for me to hold and interact with or just for the background. apparently it's "trendy" to take playful photos with abstract objects in frame. i keep seeing it everywhere; in printed magazines, in digital ones, on websites, and on social media. i must admit that i've had to pose with some... pretty bizarre things before. and in strange outfits.

but anything for money, right? i don't mind.

this room however, feels too empty. it's just white, everything is. the studio lights, the floor, the backdrop. does dream know what he's doing? carlos said he's a rising star, so surely he's got skills. i'm more than interested to see how this will turn out. maybe i'm severely underestimating him.

"perfect," he smiles as he sees me walking out, "you can sit down in the middle and give me some time to adjust the field of view."

i do as he says, despite the floor being uncomfortably solid and cold. small, occasional clicking sounds from the camera and tripod are the only things that hinder complete silence from setting in. he leans down to type something on his laptop before returning to his previous position.

i watch him as he gets ready to start the session. he looks almost emotionless as he works, leaving hints back to that same mysterious aura that i observed earlier on. if i'm being honest, he's ridiculously attractive. and he seems to be my age too, which is considerably rare. most popular photographers around have got a few years behind their current skill.

i've mostly met older men and women. they'll give you a smile, they'll praise you for posing just right, but there's no spark, no energy. it always seems like they're about ready to retire on the spot.

but this dream guy is nothing like that. he just has something special going on with him. maybe it's that look in his eye, a hidden flame of sorts. cause i could swear he looks at me differently. differently from all the others, at least.

"are we ready?" he asks, peeking out from behind the camera to get my confirmation.

"yes," i reply, my tone short and anticipating.

"okay, i'd like you to turn so that you're facing half away from me."

"to the left or the right?"

"left."

i follow the instructions, sitting so that the back left side of my head is in focus.

"pull your knees up to your chest and hug them," dream orders next. the position feels a little unnatural, but i go along with it.

"not that tightly, you can relax a little. just make sure that your arms are wrapped around your knees."

that's better.

"now hunch over. a little more.. yes, alright, that's perfect. and look back at me just slightly..."

i hold the pose, waiting as dream views me through his camera. he snaps one photo, then two, then three. the flash lights up the already painfully bright room even more, but in small bursts.

"great, now keep your eyes on the floor, and use your fingers as paintbrushes. pretend that you're painting something, very carefully."

my fingertips graze the barren surface, slowly and meticulously like he told me. the flash goes off yet again.

"and one more time, focus back on me."

i know i'm supposed to look into the camera when he says that, but i catch my curious eyes observing the man behind it instead. dream's neutral expression breaks for just a fraction of a second. you would've missed it if you blinked. he bites his bottom lip, taking a few pictures without even checking the camera.

"perfect.. facing me now."

his voice is so calm and soothing, smooth like warm milk and honey. i find myself taking a liking to it.

"left leg up, and hold it with your hand. keep your right leg flat against the floor."

wordlessly as always i pose, getting my face to appear as innocent and angelic as possible. the shutter clicks over and over.

"part your lips a little..."

more clicks.

i think i hear him lightly panting a few times, like he's out of breath. was he holding it? i suddenly become very aware of my own, paused breathing. it's like something's making me forget to do it.

"thank you, george," he says after another round, "you've done a great job."

quietly i smile at him, as i see no reason to speak. i get up from the floor to go and change back into my workwear. when the door to the back room slams shut behind me, i can finally take a deep breath. woah.

what the hell was that? a totally normal photoshoot? no. something felt different. not off, necessarily, but different nonetheless. the way his tone was so soft, and so patient. the way his stone-faced stare would crack at the edges when our eyes met.

i'm normally good at reading people, but dream really is something else. then again, it could simply be because i don't know him yet. we've barely even had a proper conversation.

i shrug it all off as i pull my shirt back on, closing the buttons one by one. it's getting pretty late, and i should start heading back home. i'm starving. some dinner would be really nice right about now.

the shoelaces slip between my fingers as i struggle tying them. my brain is caught in a fog of hunger and exhaustion. this is why i never stay after my shift is done. i become a zombie, messing

up everything.

the doubt from earlier comes back to haunt me again. i must look horrible in the pictures. dream asked for a trial with "someone special," and i probably just shattered all his hopes and expectations. the extra makeup i slathered on just minutes before most likely did nothing. it doesn't help that i had no props to hide myself behind. all the focus was directed at me, and me alone. my frail figure, my vulnerable face.

i'm desired for my so called "fragile beauty," not my confidence.

i exit the room once again. dream peeks up at me from where he's sitting, laptop open. the two sides of my brain are battling with each other; do i say something, or do i stay silent? one part is telling me to speak up, because that makes me sound professional. i have to thank him and wish him a good evening before i rush out the door. it's common sense. but the other part doesn't let me. i fucking hate when i become all shy like this. god, how hard can it be to just say something? he's a photographer like any other. i've done this a million times before.

i'm probably staring right now. i swallow the painful lump in my throat that's been building up. my legs make their own decision, and they want out. i don't mind. this is fine.

"hey, george!"

the shuffling of a laptop being set down. footsteps coming towards me. a hand on my shoulder.

"wait..."

i spin around, and there he is. he's so close to me. his hand is literally touching me. my heart races. i can feel it pumping in my throat. dream.

me thinking he stopped me to complain or say goodbye must've been dumb, because he doesn't say a thing. in fact, several long seconds pass, without a word uttered from either of us. the tension in the air could be cut with a knife.

just as i'm about to turn and leave again, his hand gently grips my chin, fingers sliding along my jawline.

"you're beautiful."

he admires me for a brief moment.

"a-and i'd love to work with you again."

i'm speechless. my breathing hitches. i try to smile, but it comes out looking awkward and lopsided. he steps away, and lets me leave without more interference.

Chapter Notes

george is not colorblind in this au. makes the descriptions more fun, and fits the storyline better overall. so you don't need to point that out.

the skyscrapers of the city are slowly being replaced by ordinary apartment buildings the further i walk. normally i would hop on the metro to get home from work, but today i really needed some fresh air. the new york metro is always so crowded, too crowded. especially during rush hour. i couldn't handle that today. not after what went down earlier. and besides, it only takes around half an hour to walk home.

i take this extra time to reflect on today's events. it all started off according to plan. wake up, shower, go to work. but it ended in a way i could've never foreseen. all because of that man behind the camera. the man with the golden blond locks, and the deeply green eyes that could captivate anyone. why can't i get him out of my mind? maybe the mystery surrounding him is what keeps me hooked. i know virtually nothing about the guy, but i'm definitely eager to learn more.

if we ever see each other in the future, that is. he did say he wanted to work with me again, whatever that's supposed to mean. i'm totally up for it. he intrigues me, in a strange kind of way.

and he called me beautiful. a word so well-known to me, yet this time it wasn't the same. you get to hear it every single day as a model; people who buy the magazines marvel over your marketed beauty, your coworkers reviewing your photos drop it all the time during conversations, and of course there's the occasional remark from the photographers. but their compliments usually lack meaning and traction. they're straight-faced and stone cold as they say it.

not that dream wasn't straight-faced when he uttered it too. but he was.. i could swear his breathing was shaky, just like mine in that moment. the word suddenly held a different meaning. it hit different. he's a young man, about my age, not some old creep. and he's attractive. like, really attractive. i have to admit it. i want to believe that it came from his heart, but i can never be sure.

i sigh, the urge to punch myself growing stronger. sort yourself out, george. why are you obsessing over a stranger? enough.

one last crosswalk, and i've arrived at my apartment complex. the little hideout i call home. i walk into the quiet stairwell, not expecting to meet anyone on the way up. this place always smells of something funky, whether it's the neighbor's freshly made curry or oily cooking fumes in general. they really should get around to installing some better ventilation. i don't doubt that the other buildings around this area have similar issues. they're all the same; slightly run down, but functioning and clutching onto that old school charm for dear life.

i wish i could live in a fancy apartment closer to the center of the city, where everything happens, but my bank account won't allow it. despite being a fairly talked about model in the underground art scene, i'm not exactly rich. i stay down with the freelancers on the scale, and i have yet to break out into the mainstream. my company does help out in pushing my photos out there, but they can only do so much. a larger corporation has to open their eyes to me for any major changes to occur.

i've got a decent income, though. but 'decent' doesn't get you far in new york city. this lame apartment was really all i could afford if i wanted to have extra money to spend every month. my home city, london, is nowhere near cheap either, but it's not as extreme as this.

to an extent, i do miss london. the pissy, unpredictable weather, the loud pubs, the annunciator on the tube lines. it's where i grew up, and where i started my career, after all. how could i not miss it?

when i had gained some traction as a model, i was urged to move overseas almost immediately. london isn't exactly the epicenter for art and pop culture, and i was told i'd get way more opportunities over here. of course i picked up on the offer straight away, excited to really make something out of this. as a bonus, i got signed by my current company before i had even stepped on the flight. everything seemed perfect.

and i still can't complain. i've got a decent life. nothing's bothering me too much. i've got food, clothes, a roof over my head, and a nice job. but the feeling that something's missing is still lingering.

to be truthful, i haven't made many friends since i moved here. i spend time with my coworkers during the days, and occasionally they'll invite me to hang out outside of work too. clubbing is also something i do for fun and social interaction, but it doesn't quite satisfy my need for human contact.

i need someone who cares about me, who loves me, whether it's a best friend or a partner. it's hard to connect with people though, especially when you walk around wearing skirts and knee socks like me. i get many judgemental stares, but those will never stop me from expressing myself. i live and breathe bows, fluffy things, baby blue and pastel pink. no one can snatch it away from me.

i flip the light switch in the hallway as i get inside. welcome home george. just another evening to waste. and tomorrow awaits another day of work. and the day after that too.

i sigh again. my life needs spontaneity. something colorful, something that i can look forward to every morning when i wake up. something dreamy.

"and that's a wrap."

i feel a smile creeping up on my lips. work has for once been really fun, and that's all on dream.

a week with no contact passed after our first encounter. i almost thought i'd never meet him again. life went on as usual, but he still stuck to the back of my mind. carlos didn't tell me too much either, other than that he was glad the shoot had gone well.

but today, out of nowhere, i was informed the minute i came into the office that dream was back. and he wanted to see me again. for longer, this time. my heart jumped inside my chest. i've never ran to a studio room so fast.

it's kind of childish, if i should be honest. i'm already stupidly drawn to dream, despite barely knowing a single thing about the guy. sure, we've made small talk during the session today, but he's definitely not one to open up to people. i still don't know his real name. i don't know where he lives, i don't know any of his hobbies outside of photography, i don't know his favorite color, what he likes to eat..

he could be a psychopath, for all i know. yet i'm still interested. i tip-toe around him like a middle school girl, eyes widening and cheeks flushing at everything he says. it's honestly embarrassing. i hope he hasn't noticed.

i get off the pedestal, approaching him slowly as he types something on his laptop.

"do they look good?"

"they're absolutely amazing," he answers without hesitation, "i could show you the ones we did last week if you want."

"sure."

he pulls up a folder - simply named 'george' - from his library full of pictures. i crouch down to where he's sitting so i can see the screen better. it's a bit uncomfortable; the playboy bunny suits obviously weren't made for hunching like this. even though i can't wait to get out of this suffocating piece of clothing, i must admit i look pretty good. the bunny tail is adorable in some sexual kind of way. and this is only one of the many outfits i've posed in today; dream must've been feeling especially creative.

"here they are."

he shows me the photos in fullscreen.

"woah..."

for the first time ever, i'm baffled by my own appearance. normally i can always find flaws. they're in every single publication, and it bothers me. sometimes the shape of my face is weird, or my stomach isn't flat enough, or my thighs are too fat. but now? i look.. perfect. my porcelain skin is smoother than ever, and as white as milk. my features are soft and delicate. the contrasting dark brown hair ties it together so wonderfully. i look almost like an angel, without the wings.

he keeps scrolling through them, each one getting more and more breathtaking.

"d-did you photoshop these? you must have, right?"

"i fixed the lighting as always but no, i did not photoshop anything. this is all real," he explains, his expression mildening, "this is what you look like, george."

i'm grinning so much it hurts. that's really what i look like? tears are welling up, tears of pure happiness. god, i'm a wuss. but after all these years of insecurity, of self-hatred, of comparing myself to others, i finally get to feel pretty. i'm pretty. all the effort i've put in. i've gone on so many diets, quit so many bad habits, refrained from so many activities purely because i was scared of injuring myself and getting bruises or scars. it's finally paid off.

"oh honey, come here."

he opens his arms for me. i don't even acknowledge the fact that he just called me honey. without a second thought i dive right in. he embraces my thin body warmly, allowing me to cry into his shoulder. my makeup is probably leaving stains on his perfectly clean white shirt, but he doesn't seem to care.

dream. he made me feel beautiful again.

"th-thank you.." i sniffle, face still hidden.

he smells like sweet lavender and cologne. i feel safe in his grip. like he's protecting me.

"you're drop-dead gorgeous, okay? don't let anyone tell you otherwise. this is undoubtedly my best work so far, and it's all you. no props, no outfits, all you."

i lean back to look at his face, straightening my bunny ears in the process. he's smiling, just like me. his hands still rest loosely on my waist. i like having them there. i want him to keep them there.

my mouth opens to speak, but not a word comes out.

"i want them published, i really do. i couldn't let something so unique go to waste. you're a star, george."

silence sets in for multiple seconds. his eyes gaze back at me, at my tear-stained face, my wet cheeks. i wish i could know what he's thinking, but he's so hard to read. his words are all i have to trust.

"thank you, again..." i mumble, breaking the eye contact.

"no problem," he replies, chuckling lightly.

he laughed. i've never heard him laugh before. he's always been dead serious around me. the brick wall he's put up to seem professional is cracking. and i'm totally here for it.

i'm about to slip out of his grasp to avoid making things more awkward when he suddenly takes my hand instead. my fingers are ice cold compared to his. they look so small and fragile when he's holding them, like he could easily break them in half if he just tried.

"before you go.." he starts, pausing and clearing his throat nervously, "would you let me take you out for dinner sometime?"

my heart does a little flip. subtle, but not subtle enough to go unnoticed.

"of course," i blush, "when?"

"well, how about right now?"

"now? i mean- i'm free right now, yeah."

"perfect," he smirks, "get changed and we'll be on our way then."

i walk into the changing room in shock. did he just ask me out? like, on a date? no. it's not a date. he didn't say it was. we're only getting dinner. that's it. he probably wants to discuss work related things. yeah. that's it. calm down.

"what are you getting, george?"

he puts down his menu, observing my worried expression as i skim through the pages.

"uhm... i think i'll just have a salad and a glass of water," i nervously shrug.

these prices are ridiculous. i should've asked dream to take me somewhere cheap, but of course i'd have to forget. everything looks delicious, but i can already hear my wallet crying for help. just play it off, george. you'll be fine.

"really?" he wonders, "you don't want a steak or anything? something more to drink?"

"well, if i'm honest.. it's a bit expensive. i don't really have-"

"oh! don't worry about that please. it's all on me. my treat."

"dream! you can't pay for me, it's-"

my sentence cuts off when he grabs my hand from across the table.

"i said, don't worry about it. it's on me tonight."

his tone is soft, so soft that i almost shiver. that confident stare could catch me off guard any day of the week. the emerald green eyes, the slight grin on his lips..

stop.

i snap out of my trance, eyeing the menu once again. this time i pick something i actually want, since dream is so insisting.

"okay, i want the filet mignon then. and maybe some red wine."

"how does artadi sound? i'll order an entire bottle for the two of us," he says, pointing at the wine list.

"dream! that's over a hundred dollars!" i exclaim.

"i swear, if you 'dream!' me one more time, i'm never speaking to you again."

he wheezes upon seeing my horrified reaction. it's the most contagious laughter i think i've ever heard. i can't help but lose my shit too.

"sorry, i'm sorry!" i giggle, "i won't, i promise."

"i'm just kidding," he huffs, "but stop. you don't have to worry about a thing when you're with me."

there it is again. that low, calming voice that always has me weak. my fingers absentmindedly play with the hem of my blue skirt. i bet i'm blushing like an idiot right now.

he calls a waiter over to order. he gets my filet mignon, the bottle of wine, and some fancy chicken dish for himself. i feel bad for leaving the bill to him. this must add up to such a high total. but he said it was fine, so i guess i'll just go along with it.

the waiter notes it all down, giving us both a welcoming smile before scurrying off into the restaurant. the late summer air is fresh, and still fairly warm at this hour. i often freeze, but i've got no problem sitting out here in a skirt and short sleeves. dream has rolled his up too, showing off muscular arms with veins running all over. i have to admit that i'm a little weak for veins. especially on someone who's already attractive in every other possible way.

he lights up a parliament as we wait for our food to arrive, leaving the pack on the table. i watch

him smoke it with dreamy eyes. my elbow rests on the dark wood, and my head in my hand. i sigh happily when he meets my longing gaze. who cares if he sees me thirst over him, he surely doesn't mind. i'm confident he already knows that he's hot as fuck.

"you look so pretty tonight."

he gently caresses my cheek, cigarette still between his fingers. his rings are cold against my skin. if i wasn't red before, i certainly am now. i lean into his touch without shame, even shutting my eyes briefly. the compliments, the way he speaks to me, treats me.. i love it.

"and you're really handsome."

i'm surprised i could even say that without stuttering or fucking up once. dream smiles at me, seemingly satisfied with my response. this is just a professional dinner, between two work buddies. nothing else. just like i told myself before in the changing room. totally just a friendly dinner. yeah. totally.

ten minutes later, two plates full of warm, luxurious food stand in front of us on the table. i definitely don't regret getting the filet mignon. it both smells and looks delicious. dream's chicken does too. the waiter opens the wine bottle for us, filling two glasses with the red, fruity liquor. it even tastes fancy. dream sure knows his way around the wine list.

i cut into the piece of meat, humming as i chew on it. it's perfectly tender and seasoned.

"this is amazing," i remark, mouth full.

"mine is really good too."

"can i taste it?"

he nods, putting a piece of chicken on his fork and feeding it to me.

"yeah, that's nice," i agree, taking another sip of my wine.

we make small talk while eating, and dream finally opens up to me. i learn that he lives only around five minutes away from the company's office, in a big apartment building overlooking the best parts of the city. he even hints at wanting to show me his place at some point. i hope he means it. we discuss the art scene, photo editing and current trends in the industry. the conversation flows so nicely, not once do i have to think about what to say next, or if something i've said sounds stupid. he makes me feel safe and accepted.

he tells me that he plays guitar and bass, and that he used to be in a band when he was younger. as high school kids they had many aspirations, but never made it further than a couple garage gigs. after they disbanded he took his love for photography and made it into an occupation, essentially following in his father's footsteps. his skill and creative attention to detail helped him gain popularity pretty quickly, leading right up to today.

when the conversation mellows out only one question remains unanswered.

"how can you afford all this? i mean, the dinner, and you've got a nice apartment.."

"i inherited," he replies, "most of it anyway. my job makes me decent money, but not enough to sustain myself if i want to keep living like this. i'm hoping to be recognized by someone who sees the raw, true talent in me. freelancing never works out in the long run."

i nod in understanding. daddy's money. who would've thought.

the bottle stands empty on the table. i'm feeling warm and relaxed as direct effects of the alcohol. a hundred dollars well spent. i chuckle at the thought. i've never been treated to such luxury before,

so this is a first for me. i'm giddy, butterflies flapping around in my stomach.

the sun set long ago, the moon now taking its place instead. we must've been sitting here for hours, yet it barely even feels like minutes. i could stay for way longer if i needed to. spending time with dream is just so easy.

the lit candles by the restaurant's entrance are running out of wax as we approach closing time. the pitch black darkness of the night sky could make anyone yawn with exhaustion. but new york city never sleeps. electric lights flood every street, no matter where you turn. thank god for blinds.

"well, what do you say, is it time to leave?"

"yeah," i shrug.

we pay - or, more correctly, dream pays - and make our way onto the sidewalk to bid each other farewell for the night. his face is even more stunning like this, when a street light hits it from an angle. i can see the cute freckles covering his sun-kissed cheeks clearly now. he takes both of my hands in his, effectively snatching my breath away at the same time.

"are you sure you'll make it home safely?" he asks, clearly worried about me.

"i'll be fine," i assure him.

"alright, but please call me if you need anything."

he hands over his business card with his number already printed on it.

"thank you dream, for tonight. i had a blast," i smile.

"thank you too, george."

"we have to do this again some time."

"so there is a next time?" he smirks, hopeful.

"definitely," i confirm.

for a second, all we do is stand there staring at each other. my heart is seriously threatening to jump out of my chest.

"uhm, p-professionally or privately?" i stutter, my eyes losing focus.

"professionally?" he snorts, "fuck that."

he leans in slightly. we're so close. i'm struggling. my fingers are trembling, my breath hitching.

"it's a date."

he grips my chin, turning my head to kiss my cheek. holy shit. without another word he leaves me there on the street, walking back to his apartment alone. i feel the little wet spot on my skin with my fingertips. dream.

"george, follow me to my office please."

carlos looks serious. he never looks this serious. i can feel the anxiety building up. what have i done this time? please don't fire me.

he must've been lurking outside the door to be able to grab me right as we finished shooting. the photographer was nothing special, all he wanted was a few posed shots for some new clothing line of his. fall themed; knitted knee highs, and woolen oversized sweaters. i quite liked the outfits. usually i'm naked, or almost naked, so this was nice for a change.

"what's up?" i ask as we enter the elevator.

"i just want to have a quick chat."

well that's reassuring.

i try my best to hide my nerves on the way up, but it's hard when you're stuck in a small box like this. for some reason the thought of showing my weak side to those working above me is terrifying. it's probably not uncommon though. not wanting to ask for help or advice because you're scared you'll seem dumb. pretending you understand something to avoid confrontation, even though you don't have a clue what you're doing. common stuff.

we make our way past casual conversations, hardworking economists, and graphic designers on lunch break. the building is always bustling with life around this time of day. it was scary in the beginning, especially for someone like me who isn't used to so much social interaction. but nowadays it's all background noise. i've constantly got places to be, and no time to worry about people.

carlos unlocks the door to his private office, nicely stowed away in the very corner of the 41st floor. this place has become all too familiar to me during my time at the company. carlos cares for his employees well, and likes to schedule regular meetings for evaluation. he really does value our wellbeing the most, knowing that this industry can be tough on your mental health. i couldn't wish for a better boss, honestly.

"alright, have a seat," he orders, all the sounds of the corridor outside disappearing as he closes the door behind us.

i slip into the black, padded chair, conveniently placed right in front of his big baroque-styled desk. he sits down in his own chair, clearing his throat before he starts speaking.

"so, how are things going with dream?"

the question catches me off guard.

"u-uhm, good, i guess?" i mumble, "why?"

"well, we're thinking of hiring him, so we want some reference," he explains, "you've already done two shoots with him, how does it feel?"

"i don't know, it feels good so far, h-he's very kind, and talented, of course."

silence sets in. carlos tilts his head, observing me with furrowed eyebrows.

"is there something else that you're not telling me?"

"what makes you think that?"

"you're stuttering, george," he points out, "you only stutter when you're nervous. makes me believe that you're hiding something."

i bite my lip. goddamn it, why does he have to be so good at reading people? can't tell a single lie around him, ever.

"it's important that you voice any concerns you have, we're discussing a future employee here."

"that's really all i have to say. he seems like a nice, genuine person. i've enjoyed working with him, at least," i shrug, refraining from spilling the whole truth. my boss doesn't need to know about our dinner, or how attractive i think dream is. or how he kissed me on the cheek just a few days ago.

a smug smirk materializes on his lips. he places his elbows on the redwood desk, clasping his hands together.

"so you're not," he coughs, "interested in him, by any chance? i know it's not my place to bring this up, it's uh, not very professional of me, but i've seen the way you look at him when he walks by, george."

fuck. i have been defeated.

an intense shade of pink spreads upon my cheeks. i attempt to hide it with my hand, but to no avail.

"is it that obvious?"

"kind of, yeah," he chuckles.

"ugh, leave me aloooone, he's hot okay!" i whine, rolling my eyes.

"i've heard that he can be quite a charmer. watch out.."

this. i like this. i like when me and carlos can talk and joke casually, like we're real friends and not only coworkers. we've interacted outside of work before, and i've even gone clubbing with him once. not the best night out i've ever had, but we did do a lot of crazy shit together. you couldn't believe that he's over ten years older than me. still a teenager at heart, i guess.

"i'm joking, i'm joking," he laughs, "but thank you for your insight. i'll take it into consideration."

"so he'll be hired?" i gasp, maybe a little too excitedly.

"if the rest of the process goes smoothly, yes. the company could definitely use some fresh, young faces."

i nod, relieved that i'm not fired. was that serious look he pulled on me really necessary? this wasn't a big deal at all.

"i've seen the photos from those two shoots, by the way. dream has pushed really hard to get them published even though they were only gonna be tests."

"really?"

"yeah, and i'll make sure to grant him his wishes," carlos confirms, "those pictures are way too unique. it would be a shame to let them go to waste."

"thank you carlos," i grin, the subtle compliment cheering me up.

"you've worked so hard, and it's paying off. i personally believe you can go really far, especially with a talented photographer like dream. he's passionate about you, i can see it in his work. you two have serious potential if you stick together."

"so you're saying that-"

"i'm saying that i want you working with him a lot more. prioritize it. other shoots are unimportant for now, okay?"

i can't believe it. it's like everything is forcing us together. not that i mind, not at all. i would pose only for him if i had the option.

"o-okay, fine by me."

"perfect, then i believe we're done here," he declares, allowing me to stand up.

on the side of his desk, right by his computer, is a framed picture of his family. his wife, his two twin boys, and their adorable german shepherd. i eye it one last time before pushing the chair in, getting ready to leave the office.

"see you around, i guess," i smile, grabbing the doorhandle.

"wait, george!" he exclaims.

"hm?"

i turn around to face him once again.

"go get that cake."

i almost dance my way out of the elevator on the the first floor. carlos' words have made my entire day. not only is the chance of dream working here really high, i'm also gonna be able to interact with him a whole lot more now. i don't care if i'm acting like a childish, lovestruck idiot, cause at least i'm happy. really really happy. my life has seriously taken a positive turn, completely out of nowhere.

it's barely past noon, yet i'm already on my way home. no more photoshoots today, and no more paperwork either. it's a rare occurrence, but when it does happen it's a fucking party. i don't hate my job, not at all, but who complains about some extra free time? not me at least.

the doors to freedom slide open and i step out onto the sidewalk full of people. the hot air hits me like a truck, sun shining brightly in my face. inside the air con is always on full blast, but out here you're stuck sweating bullets until you get home. these dress pants don't breathe at all. god, i hate them. it's in moments like these that i miss my drawer full of skirts the most. pants are a devil's curse. why can't everyone just wear skirts instead? if it's cold, wear a longer, thicker skirt. it's simple. they're perfect for every weather.

i'm about to make a left turn to get to the metro station when someone suddenly calls my name.

"george!"

i spin around to try and locate the source of the sound. that voice is all too familiar. a group of people push past me who's stopped in the middle of crowded street. i swear, clogging up the flow is punishable by death in new york. the man who's been trying to grab my attention starts waving his hand. oh my god. and as if i thought this day couldn't get any better.

it's dream, on a smoke break. he's leaning against the wall of the building next door. a huge smile creeps upon my lips as i waltz over to him.

"hi," he chuckles, "didn't think i'd see you here."

"i work here, dumbass," i giggle, lightly slapping his arm, "and i've heard you will soon too."

"yeah, i just had an interview actually."

"you know, i might've put in a good word with my boss."

"you did?" he wonders, grinning as he takes a drag, "that's so sweet of you. c'mere, give me a hug, honey."

butterflies flood my stomach as he pulls me into his arms. i don't hesitate to hug him back. he makes me feel so safe, so disconnected from the rest of the world when he holds me. it only lasts for a few, brief seconds, but long enough to mesmerize me.

"you look unhappy in those boring clothes."

"i fucking hate them," i groan, "i'm literally going straight home to change."

"mind if i follow you?"

"huh?"

what the fuck.

"yeah, i could drive you home if you want. i'm free right now," he smirks at me, who's anxiously fiddling with my brown strands of hair.

"u-uhm, i mean, sure, if it's not a bother."

"great! my car is just on the other side of the building, follow me."

he grips my small wrist in his much bigger hand, dragging me away from the wall we were leaning against. i lose my breath at his sudden touch. oh my god. i swear, this guy knows exactly what he's doing. he knows what he's doing to me, and he likes it.

when we've walked down the alleyway leading to the parking lots, dream pulls his car keys out of his pocket. i catch a glimpse of the logo on the remote. bmw. of course he would drive a bmw. what else? an old toyota corolla? definitely not.

i'm still wondering how the hell i ended up befriending such a rich person. to me, the upper class have always been snarky and rude, but dream is nothing like that. he might be a little cold, and a little void of emotion sometimes, but rude? never. he's actually very sweet beneath that serious shell of his.

he presses the button to unlock it, making the headlights of a really nice black bmw blink and light up. it's parked amidst a sea of other expensive-looking cars. i wish i could have luxury like this, but i know it's just a distant dream. especially considering i don't even have my drivers license yet.

"hop in," he motions, opening the door on the passenger side for me.

"thank you," i blush at his kind action.

i didn't think i could enjoy being treated like a lady this much. but clearly, i am. maybe it's only because it's dream who's doing it. cause i seem to adore absolutely everything he does. from the way he occasionally flips his curly hair, to the way he takes my hand and looks into my eyes when he compliments me. i'm crushing on him like a teenage girl. sigh.

he gets into the drivers seat, fastening his seatbelt before starting the engine.

"alright, just give me directions as we go."

i nod, peering out the window to hide my huge, stupid grin. we're actually going to my place. i'm gonna show the one and only dream around my apartment. hopefully he isn't disappointed. oh god, i didn't even think about that. why did i start thinking about that? what if he thinks i'm pathetic for having such a small apartment? shit. okay, breathe. no time to worry about that now. just enjoy the free ride.

"turn right out of here, and onto the main street," i explain, "then just follow that for a while. it's like a ten minute drive."

he wordlessly follows my instructions. normally i would find silence like this awkward, but now it's almost fitting. i still need time to digest the fact that i'll have dream standing in the middle of my home soon. what will we even do? is he actually going to follow me up or did he just offer me a ride? everything's gnawing on me, yet i'm still feeling comfortable, sitting right next to him as he drives.

minutes pass. we stop for a while at a red light by a huge intersection. i don't notice dream gazing at me until he contently sighs. his beautiful green eyes are half-lidded, his lips curved up into a slight smile.

"what?" i giggle.

"just admiring the view."

"you hungry?"

dream gets up from the couch, placing the tv remote on the living room table.

"yeah, kinda," i shrug, watching him pace into the kitchen.

"i could make us some dinner if you want."

"you really don't need to, dream-"

"but i want to."

i can never win.

hours have passed since he drove me home. i really didn't think he'd want to stay for long, but here we are. it's already past six, and i'm definitely not complaining. time flies when you're having fun.

i showed dream around for a couple of minutes, and he kept commenting on how cute he thought everything was. the many house plants i own, the led lights hanging wherever i could fit them, the fluffy carpet on the bathroom floor. i wasted countless hours on decorating this place, and i felt so proud of my efforts when he showered my interior design skills in compliments. like all those wasted hours finally meant something.

last but not least, i showed him my skirt drawer. i didn't think dream, out of everyone, could gasp so audibly. since i hadn't changed yet he insisted on picking one out for me to wear. i found it adorable, so i let him. he dug around in that drawer for several minutes, slowly taking in the unhealthy amount of skirts i own. in the end he settled for a pretty basic black skirt, with a white stripe near the bottom. i grabbed a black sweatshirt to match, and chased him out of my bedroom before changing.

as i pulled it on, i couldn't help but notice the length of it. or, the lack of length. it definitely looked to be one of the shortest ones i own. i wonder if that was intentional from dream's side.

after that we mostly talked. and watched some tv for an hour or two. it's been strangely calming. dream just radiates good vibes, and everything feels natural when i'm with him. in those moments of rambling about whatever shit we could think of, it felt like we had known each other since forever. like we're childhood friends or something, when in reality we met less than a month ago.

"you've got some leftover beef, and a lot of vegetables," he notes, snapping me out of my deep thoughts, "i could make boeuf bourguignon."

"boeuf- what?"

"boeuf bourguignon. it's french."

i laugh at the stupid name, hesitantly nodding to grant him permission.

"how'd you learn to cook such fancy things anyway?"

"i don't know, it's been kinda like a background hobby of mine for years now," he shrugs, "come sit over here and speak to me. this will take a while to make."

i get up from my comfortable position on the couch, stretching my limbs and groaning. it's already starting to get darker outside despite the early hour. just another bitter reminder that summer is coming to an end.

contrary to popular belief i actually love summer. the weather's always great, there's ice cream wherever you go, swimming, piña coladas... i could go on for hours. i have to stay fairly covered to

avoid tanning though, which sucks. it's not an extremely strict requirement, but i prefer keeping my skin milky white. it's one of the biggest reasons why i'm desirable within my line of work.

"is it alright if i use some of your wine?" dream asks, "i need it for the recipe."

"yeah, go on," i reply, taking a seat on a barstool by the counters.

he inspects the labels of some bottles sitting on a shelf on the wall.

"why do you need to cook something so advanced?" i snort, "we could just order takeout and you could relax instead."

"because you only deserve the best, my dear."

oh, the endless flirting. it has me weak. i giggle shamelessly at the pet name, and dream just wheezes at my reaction.

he whips out a few pots and pans and starts boiling water in one of them. the other is for searing the beef, and the third is for making the sauce. my mouth is already watering at the sight of it all. i haven't had a proper fancy meal like this one in ages. well, apart from the filet mignon at the restaurant. all i eat every day is just boring, small salads, and the occasional "healthy" piece of chicken or fish. red meat is usually out of the equation. but, you've got to have cheat days sometimes too, right?

when the vegetables have been heated in the pan, he moves them into the pot with the beef to let it simmer. the wine bottle makes a clicking sound as it opens. without measuring, dream boldly starts pouring the deeply red liquid into the mixture.

"dream! chill with the wine!" i remind him, getting ready to stand up and make him stop.

"i'm just following the recipe by heart!" he jokes, "and besides, it's friday! we're allowed to treat ourselves."

"okay, okay, i trust you then."

he lets out that contagious laugh of his again, stirring the ingredients in the pot before lowering the temperature and putting a lid on.

"do you want dessert too? i could make-"

"no, dream! i have to think about my figure!"

"you know what i've said about 'dream!-ing' me," he points out, his voice deep and just above a whisper.

it gives me shivers, the way he takes a seat next to me and proceeds to make eye contact. i suddenly become very aware of the way i'm sitting. close your legs, george. this skirt definitely doesn't hide much.

dream observes my nervous actions with a slight grin.

"don't be shy, sweetheart."

my heart begins to race. he gets off the chair again, walking up so that he's just inches away from me. his hand carefully grazes the bare skin on my thigh, making me lose my breath a hundred times over.

"is this okay?" he whispers, hot air bouncing off my lips.

i nod silently, unable to form coherent words.

at my confirmation, he grips them a little harder, slowly pushing them apart again. i blush furiously as he steps in between my legs. we're around the same height now that i'm sitting on this high

barstool. his freckles are so pretty, so visible from this distance. his curly hair hangs low enough to almost cover those breathtaking emerald eyes. i reach out to move it away, and to play with it. it's soft and silky. i adore the texture.

"give me a little kiss," he requests, pouting with his bottom lip.

all i can do is giggle, and turn a darker shade of pink. does he seriously want a kiss? i'm going to explode.

bravely i wet my lips, shut my eyes, and lean in for a quick peck. he doesn't have time to kiss me back because it's over so soon.

when i finally dare to look again, dream is blushing. dream is blushing! and holy shit, is it adorable.

"thank you," he mumbles, stepping away to check on the food.

i'm giddy, and over the fucking moon. even if that was just a little friendly peck, it meant so much to me. so so much.

"that was delicious, thank you."

"no problem," dream responds, watching me as i remove the empty plates from the table.

the radio is set to a station full of classical music on low volume. it fit nicely as background noise during our dinner. dream mentioned how he'd grown up with classical music due to his father having it on all the time. at first he had hated it like many other kids do, but over time, especially after his father passed, he had learned to love it and appreciate it for what it is. i didn't want to ask too many questions about his father, didn't want to risk upsetting him.

as i'm about to start washing the dishes the previous song ends, and a new one fades in. i instantly recognize the piece as tchaikovsky's swan lake. dream jolts up and increases the volume so that it becomes more than just background noise. with a small, almost non-existent smile appearing on his face, he waltzes right over to me and offers me his hand.

"sorry, this is just nostalgia for me," he chuckles, "but may i have a dance?"

i take it without hesitation, grinning like an idiot when he looks down at me. my other hand rests on his shoulder, while i've got an arm comfortably snaked around my waist. i know a thing or two about dancing. i did ballet up until high school, and even though this is nothing like ballet, i'll manage. and after all, i'm not just dancing with anyone. i'm dancing with dream. the man i've grown to adore perhaps a little too much over the past few weeks.

he starts to slowly rock us back and forth, letting me ease into his touch. i sigh contently, maintaining eye contact. he looks at me like i'm a treasure, like i'm his treasure. i want to kiss him again. i want to kiss him so bad.

in his grip i feel warm, safe, and calm. i feel untouchable. i feel like the happiest man alive. his gentle movements have cast a spell on me.

he takes me to the open area of the living room, where we can move more freely. as the music gets more intense, so does our dancing. but it's still as smoothly flowing as before. he lifts my arm and spins me around, understandably in awe at my talent. my heart leaps every time i catch a glimpse of him, every time i feel his breathing down my neck. my skirt twirls with me.

i'm free. i feel free. free from the restraints of dull city streets, the chores of daily life. nothing matters anymore, only dream. dream and his soft hands, those hands that have flied across my skin many times now, that have pressed the button on the camera, and successfully convinced me of my true beauty.

dream and his flawless looks, who have attached to me like an anvil and sunk me deep into the sea. now i'm standing helpless on the ocean floor, but i'm still breathing, and i'm still alive. more alive than ever, i'd like to add. cause i'm definitely not drowning. and never would i wanna think of a way to escape.

i'm pulled closer to his chest as the orchestra play softer for the middle section. he wraps both his arms around my small body, holding me there as we peacefully sway for a little while. his face is nuzzling my hair, mouth leaving featherlight kisses on the top of my head. i close my eyes, savoring this ethereal moment of bliss. dream is for sure living up to his name right now. when i met him for the first time, i would've never guessed that he could be such a hopeless romantic. but he's proven me wrong, and i'm here for it.

he sends me out into a twirl again as the song builds up. it's all making me feel dizzy, but delightfully so. it's the kind of dizzy where you're still in control, but with your head lost in a wonderful haze. he's making me buzz with electricity every time he touches my sensitive waist. i have to keep reminding myself that breathing is crucial for survival, otherwise i'd forget.

to an outsider it must look like a scene taken straight out of a movie. the windows behind us overlooking the sparkling city, the dimmed lighting inside the room, the way we're clutching onto each other, the way dream looks so hot just like a movie star..

i lose my breath once more when he pushes me back against a wall. he's towering over me with his superior height, making me beautifully vulnerable. i go weak when i feel his every exhale on my skin, unsteady and rapid as they are. we're only inches apart now, inches that i want to erase.

for a few seconds we only stare. his expression is filled with lust and desire, and i tense up as he eyes me up and down. blood is rushing to all the right places. i know he wants me to make the first move, he wants me to be sure of this. so i do. i tug on his hair, pulling him in so that our lips can meet.

they're soft, and sync perfectly with mine. he wastes no time on useless pecks. i let him explore my mouth, every single corner of it. his hands are keeping me firmly in place. i get lost in him and his actions. he kisses me so roughly now, that i tremble. my back is pressed so hard against the wall that it almost hurts, but i don't care. my mind is solely focused on dream.

i moan into his mouth, unable to resist the urge for any longer. at that, his hands relocate to my thighs, fingers running up the bare skin and in under my skirt. they brush against my dick, effectively making me more desperate. we both know exactly what we want.

he walks me backwards into my bedroom, pushing me down on the mattress. he's fully in charge, and i love it. we make out again, but this time it's only cut off by my sweater slipping over my head. i try to help him with the buttons on his dress shirt, however i'm too shaky, too clumsy.

he takes off my skirt and my underwear, and for a moment i forget that he's already seen me like this before. but now is different.

his own underwear comes off last, and i look at his body in awe. how a human can be so gorgeous is astounding. i'm not allowed to admire him for long though, as my vision gets blocked by a passionate kiss.

the rest of the night is a wonderful fog of pleasure. he preps me so carefully like no one's ever done before, and listens to my every signal. he's so big that it stings like hell when he enters me, but with a dozen pecks all over my face and a calming massage of my sides it's just a petty problem.

it's not long until i'm yearning for more, begging him to fuck me with no mercy. he acts accordingly. i can't handle it, how carelessly he slams into me over and over. it drives me wild, turns me into a hot, moaning mess. the bedsheets wrinkle under my writhing body. i claw at his back, drawing blood for each thrust.

his skin is clammy and glowing a beautiful shade of red because of the led lights. i'm sweating too, and panting from exhaustion. the pain is fading, but i don't want it to go away. i plead and whine for more like a puppy. he becomes feral. it's brutal, but it feels fucking amazing. i love when he destroys me, i love when he makes me so full. my head is swimming, and my eyes rolling back.

he pulls my hair and sucks down on my neck. everything to make me feel as good as possible. who cares about the inevitable hickeys, and the soreness i'll be cursed with? we're living in the now.

pleasure is all that matters. it's all we're here for.

his tip hits my prostate again and again. i scream his name, i moan it, i chant it. the world seems distant, yet amplified and colorful. i'm messed up in the best way.

"d-dream! mmh, ahhh- dream.."

fuck me- please, faster, please...

what are you to me, dream? are you just my friend, my coworker? an acquaintance? a one night stand? someone who only wants me for sex? someone who will use me once and leave, use me and kick me to the curb when they're done?

i don't want it to be any of those. i want you to be my lover.

a streak of sunlight shines into my bedroom, forcing me awake. of course i forgot to close my blinds last night.

i stretch my stiff limbs, yawning as i flip around in bed. somehow it feels cold and empty. like something's missing. when i've opened my eyes fully, i finally realize. dream. dream isn't here. suddenly all the memories from yesterday come flooding in. our dinner, our dance, him pinning me against the wall, kissing me, taking my clothes off, the night ending in sex...

it felt so good. it felt so right. he treated me like an angel, with kind hands and gentle actions. he listened to my every want and need, and made me go blind with pleasure. i swear i almost passed out. everything was surreal. i don't know how long we stayed there, as time seemed to warp and freeze and speed up again. it felt like forever, but an amazing kind of forever. i miss him already.

is he out in the kitchen? it wouldn't surprise me if he's making breakfast for us, just to be nice. he keeps insisting on taking care of me, of babying me. i've grown to love it over this short period of time. he could cook me the same meals every day for the rest of my life and i'd still be happy.

i stop moving around to listen after any footsteps, or sounds of metal and ceramics. but my apartment is dead silent. all i can hear are distant sirens and engine noises from the streets outside my window. did he leave? he probably did. why did i even get my hopes up in the first place? i sigh. and now my ass is sore. great.

the clock on my nightstand tells me it's nine am. i'm just about to climb out of bed to find my phone when i spot a piece of paper laying beside it. i reach out to grab and unfold it, curiosity creeping up on me.

it's a note. a note with neat handwriting, like a mix between really nice cursive and something else.

good morning cutie. i had to leave early. urgent business. i didn't want to disturb you while you were sleeping, i'm sorry :(next time you'll wake up in my arms ♡

i don't even realize that i'm smiling more and more as i read. next time. there's a next time. my heart just did a flip. so it wasn't a one time thing, and he didn't plan on ditching me after all. the hope in me is rising.

maybe i should text him, or call him. or is that annoying? he said whatever he had to do this morning was urgent. could be a meeting or something. i should wait, if i even decide to contact him at all today.

the white bedsheets smell like sex, but they also smell like him. i find myself liking it. if i shut my eyes it's almost like he's right here with me, like we've just fucked and now we're coming down from our high together. but dreaming is for another time. i have to get this cleaned up.

i grab a new pair of boxer briefs from my wardrobe, seeing as the other ones were thrown on the floor last night. right now i need a glass of water, and a long shower to contemplate my existence.

the air in the living room is much fresher, but lacks that cozy aura. i stand in front of the windows to let the sun naturally warm me up for a while. nothing's better than some sunlight when you're feeling cold and alone. several feet below the glass cars and taxis share the roads. saturday mornings make it way less crowded than usual. no stressed commuters, no powerwalking businessmen carrying their suitcases along. only the homeless and some families pass by on the

sidewalks. this is why weekends are superior.

when i throw a glance at the kitchen i'm tempted to fall back down into bed again. the dishes. i never did them yesterday, cause someone had other plans. right. one more thing to add to today's list of chores.

but i notice something else too. something on the counter by the barstools. with furrowed eyebrows i limp towards it. it's... wait. it's a money clip. and another handwritten note is attached to it. i slide it out to be able to read.

i stole the rest of that bottle of wine from yesterday, sorry. but here's some money to pay you back for it. see you on monday ♡

one, two, three, four, five... five hundred dollars. that bottle was twenty bucks tops, and dream the wine expert would know that too. five hundred dollars. what the fuck. why are there five hundred dollars in cash on my table. why would he leave- nevermind.

god i feel spoiled. we're not even a thing, are we? he hasn't mentioned it at least. yeah we slept with each other, but only once, and that doesn't have to mean anything. dream probably fucks ten other people a day. it wouldn't surprise me. i really like the guy but, who can blame me for assuming that?

he could have anyone in the world. he's wealthy, intelligent, tall, romantic, amazing in bed, a talented photographer, terribly attractive, and way too charming. and he's got a big dick. why would he choose specifically me, out of everyone who's out there? sure, i'm a model and not bad looking, but what else is there to me? the fact that i like to wear skirts even though i'm an adult man? how i giggle after every single sentence? i'm so shallow in comparison.

but for the first time ever, i'm looking forward to monday. i'm already having images pop up in my head. images of us together under the sheets, him exploring my body with his mouth, his hands. i can't wait.

"good afternoon george!" carlos greets as he steps out of the elevator.
"good afternoon carlos," i smile back.

he's got his usual cup of black coffee in hand, looking stressed as ever with multiple folders and papers stowed away under his arm.

"you look happy today," he points out, "was your weekend good?"
"yeah it was.. pretty alright."
"nice to hear. dream is waiting for you in third, just so you know."

my jaw almost drops. yes yes yes yes-
"o-oh, okay," i stutter, "thank you."

he nods and hurries away just as quickly as he came. if only he knew...

i feel myself becoming flustered just thinking about friday's events. this will be the first meeting between dream and i since then. i debated calling him over the weekend, but pussied out, figuring he was probably busy. he didn't contact me either. i must admit, i did feel a little lonely without him. it's not like we've hung out much or often, but now that he's given me a first taste of what he has to offer, i'm starting to crave more. time to muster up enough courage for a serious talk, i guess.

passing through the hallway, the anxiety begins to kick at me. what will i say? what will he say? are things going to be awkward between us? will this shoot be completely normal and platonic? will he give me basic instructions like always, and occasional praises like he usually does? i'm stupidly nervous.

room three. alright. the metal sign on the wall seems more intimidating now than ever. my fingers scramble to get my phone out of my pocket. i slide open the front camera to check what i look like. okay. hair is fine, makeup is decent, my face is... debatable. could be better, could be worse. hopefully dream thinks i'm pretty enough. that's all that matters in the end.

a deep breath and half a minute of overthinking later, i grab the doorhandle. i pull it down. slowly but surely the door slides open, revealing a bright pink backdrop that's been set up inside. i've barely even taken two steps into the room when a man twice my size suddenly launches himself at me. his golden hair is fluffier than ever, his green eyes glistening with excitement.

he shuts the door behind me before forcefully pushing me up against it. i gasp as he keeps me pinned there, hands putting pressure on my chest. our lips collide in a yearning, aggressive kiss. his tongue slips into my mouth, not letting me breathe for even a second. the butterflies in me are going wild. yeah, this wasn't what i expected. but sometimes unexpected things are welcome too.

he undos button after button on my shirt, still kissing me roughly. i whimper when his fingers trail down my bare torso. something in the back of my mind tells me no, tells me that it's time to stop. not here. not in the studio. we're supposed to be doing a photoshoot. but my body doesn't listen. i'm already getting hard, and i don't plan on letting go any time soon.

it feels so good, too good, when my tongue grazes his. when his hands tug on my hair. when his hips accidentally grind against mine. i quickly drift away from reality, too caught up in the heat of the moment. he's got me spellbound. he's got me dreaming.

when i quietly moan from the contact dream breaks it off. i knew it eventually had to end, yet i'm

still disappointed.

"god, i've been longing to do that the entire weekend," he whispers, so close to me that i feel his breath on my face.

"m-me too," i pant.

"alright, now that you're warmed up, strip and we'll get started."

my lips are wet and swollen from our intense make out. it better not ruin the photos, or i'm putting all the blame on him. he backs away, giving me some unwanted space. what a tease. but i know we'll have time for this later.

my eyes flicker between dream and the door to the back room. i don't need to go in there to change. he already knows me pretty well. more than pretty well.

as he turns and gets behind the camera i slide my shirt off the rest of the way. it hangs safely on the back of a chair. my nicely polished black shoes come off next, and then my dress pants and my underwear. for some reason i feel more naked now than last time. maybe it's because the atmosphere in the room already holds some kind of sexual tension. dream isn't only a photographer now, he's become something else. i know he probably enjoys seeing me like this. and i for sure enjoy the thought of showing myself to him.

he motions for me to sit down in front of the backdrop, kind of like i did during the first shoot. a few moments pass while he fixes the angle and lighting. when he eventually does look through the camera, nothing happens. i expect a bright flash like always, but the room stays silent and motionless. am i not posing well enough? is my expression not spot on? i'm trying my best to look pretty.

my gaze ends up down in my lap, and that's when i realize. fuck. i'm still hard.

"you got a problem there?" dream snickers.

his smug smirk really doesn't help. i want to hide. this is too embarrassing. i'm supposed to be prepared, looking flawless for professional pictures, and yet here i am. horny at work. awesome.

"s-sorry," i mutter, "we might have to just start later-"

"no, no, it's fine. how about... how about you touch yourself?"

"what?"

i stare at him in disbelief.

"yeah, touch yourself for me."

"uhm, sure?"

what little dignity i had left just vanished. fuck it. what's there to lose anymore? if it makes dream happy... and i'd do anything to satisfy him.

my hand loosely grips my shaft, thumb massaging the tip. he doesn't hesitate for a second. the flash goes off. and off again. and again. i close my eyes, shamelessly jerking off for the camera. i imagine it's dream's hand that's touching me, slowly and meticulously. he would tease me just like this, and leave me pleading for more. hushed moans start to pour out of my mouth, but i bite my lip to stifle them.

i change positions to let dream get some better shots. this is serious work, i can't forget that no matter how lost in myself i get. clear pre cum leaks out as i pick up the pace. for once i gather enough courage to look straight into the lens. my eyes are still half-lidded, and my mind

overwhelmed with pleasure. i'm probably drooling. i always am.

the blinding white light doesn't faze me at all. nothing fazes me. though my cheeks are terribly red, i'm not embarrassed anymore. i could easily do this again. because i have a feeling someone will ask me to do this again, at some point. now that he's got a taste of what i'm comfortable with, he won't quit.

"nghh, d-dream," i softly moan. the clicking of the shutter abruptly cuts off.
"stop."

i throw a glance at him, confused as i keep on going.
"i said stop."

his voice gets more stern, more serious. i realize i should probably do as he says.
"w-why?"
"get up," he orders, taking my clothes from the chair and bringing them to me.
"did i do something wrong?"

as i try to stand i discover that my legs are shaky and unbalanced. i'm numb from the new lack of stimulation. dream helps me with my balance by kindly holding my waist. he begins to trace my collarbones with his fingertips, sending shivers down my spine.

"no, honey," he breathes, "i just don't want you to cum yet."

i notice the obvious bulge growing in his pants. it only turns me on more.

"let's take this photoshoot.. back to my place."

i've never gotten dressed faster before.

we're barely inside the apartment when dream smashes his lips onto mine. the door locks with a click as he kicks off his shoes. i force mine off too, not even bothering to lean down and untie them properly.

once we've passed that obstacle he pushes me through the hallway leading to his bedroom. i'm sure the apartment is lovely and very spacious, but right now i can't see a thing. his hands are everywhere; in my hair, on my neck, my waist, unbuttoning my dress shirt for the second time today..

he kisses me so roughly that i'm becoming dizzy. my lips already feel swollen and bruised from earlier, but dream shows no signs of mercy. i gasp as he palms me through my pants. hurry up, hurry up, hurry up-

i suddenly fall backwards, losing my air as i hit the bed. he pins me down into the mattress, staring at me intensely with those breathtaking emerald eyes. a fire of lust and desire burn in them. he looks wild. it turns me on like hell, seeing how much he wants me, seeing how desperate he is to fuck me senseless.

he grinds himself against me as his shirt comes off. he does it with one hand like in the movies, his curls following the fabric up and then falling back down into a cute mess again. and holy shit, i will never get used to his body. those flawlessly outlined abs, his warm, tanned skin.. he looks like a work of art. one of god's masterpieces. my fingertips run over his muscles, feeling every part of him. the grinding stops, and instead he leans in close to my ear, whispering his words.

"like what you see?"

"i love it."

at that, he smirks and starts undressing the rest of me. he does it so painfully slow, just to tease me. his hands linger on my hips for way too long.

"come on.." i whine, "p-please-"

"if you complain, i'll make you wait even longer."

nothing could shut me up quicker.

"good boy," he praises, pecking my cheek and ruffling my hair.

my belt clangs as he opens it and carelessly tosses it over his shoulder. cold air hits my thighs when my pants come off. once i'm stripped down to my underwear he stops again, tugging at the hem like the annoying piece of shit he is. his mouth leaves wet kisses just below my stomach. they're like small injections, giving me goosebumps and fucking up my breathing.

when he finally decides to slide my boxers off, i'm practically delirious. the lack of stimulation is driving me insane, making all my limbs tremble. i'm silently praying that he'll move on and give me what i so deeply desire. but instead of prepping me, he gets up and shoots me one of those smug grins again.

"stay there, pup. still, or i'll have to punish you."

just the thought of dream punishing me has me horny out of my mind. he could spank me, choke me, gag me, spit on me and degrade me for hours and i would love it. i would thank him. i would

beg him for more. but despite that, i comply like a scaredy cat. i even refrain from touching myself in case that would upset him.

he frantically digs around in the top drawer of his dresser. i watch him pull out handcuffs, a pink dog collar, a bottle of lube and a polaroid camera. a truly vintage one, probably way too expensive for what it is.

"i'd like to continue our shoot, if that's okay with you," he declares.

his voice is soft and low, like music to my ears. i nod, unsure of exactly what that entails. he strips before getting on top of me again, straddling my small waist.

"you'll love what i'm about to do to you puppy."

i feel his hot breath graze my bruised lips. it makes me shiver. he grips my wrists tight, forcing my arms up above my head. i whimper at the action, growing more and more excited by the second.

"tell me if i should stop and i will, okay?" he murmurs, kissing my forehead lovingly. my heart flutters from the affection. even though the dominant, almost animalistic side of dream is insanely hot i love this sweeter side too. it proves that he's just as protecting and nurturing as he is merciless and brutal. what more could you ask for?

it's not long until i'm handcuffed to the bedframe, unable to move freely. dream chuckles upon seeing me this helpless, this vulnerable. holy fuck, he's sexy. especially when he bites his lip like that, eyeing me up and down while getting ready to tear me apart. i just want to pull him down and kiss him again, but i can't.

he places the pink collar around my neck, tightening it until it puts some pressure on my throat. a metal chain is attached to it so he can hold me and control me as he likes. the sensation is too much; i twist and turn desperately under him.

"dream.. f-fuck me- please..." i plead, looking up at him with blank, half-lidded eyes.

"didn't even have to ask you to beg, huh?" he evilly grins, coating his fingers with lube, "you're lucky i don't feel like waiting any longer."

without warning, he pushes two fingers in, making me release a shaky moan. i look away, biting my tongue to try and stifle them, but to no avail. dream notices my attempts to stay silent and harshly tugs on the collar to torture me even more. the leather forces my head up. i whimper again.

"don't be shy honey, let it out," he purrs, "i want to hear you, i want to hear you when you scream my name.."

my toes curl up as he stretches me, slowly and meticulously. his fingers already feel big inside me, but deep down i know that this is nothing compared to what's up next.

one more finger, and i'm high on pleasure. his movements are precise and perfectly controlled. i can tell he's done this many times before. he picks up the pace for a few moments and lets me enjoy it while i can. my eyes are shut all the way now. i groan as he pumps them in and out, i gasp as he suddenly removes them.

when my eyelids flutter open again dream is pouring the clear lubricant into the palms of his hands, carefully rubbing it onto his length. i'm still in awe of his size. it makes it hurt so good, makes me feel so full. i can't wait.

my legs shake in anticipation as he lines up with my entrance, peppering my face with small kisses.

despite his great efforts to stay cold and distant the shell is cracking, the wholesomeness spilling out. i wonder if he's like this with other people too. does he show the same affection as he does with me?

he spreads my legs open, softly sucking on my neck as he enters me. i feel my walls stretching more and more the deeper he goes. it stings, but in an amazing way. his teeth bite at my sensitive skin, leaving marks and bruises. i know i'll regret those marks tomorrow when i have to wake up earlier to cover them with makeup. but tomorrow doesn't matter now. only dream does.

when i think he's all the way in he keeps on going. and going, and going. i crane my head back, a hushed wail escaping my throat. he will destroy me.

"tell me when you're ready sweetheart."

"n-now! now- please, d-dream.."

he grabs a fistful of my dark brown hair, slamming into me mercilessly just like i wished. i scream as the pain washes over me in waves, i scream when it mixes with mounds of pleasure. my hands try to pull and claw at something in distress, but they're still hopelessly stuck over my head. the sharp metal digs into my wrists, creating even more temporary color on my porcelain skin.

the leather around my neck effectively chokes me of air as he tightens it in rounds. tears trickle down my already puffy cheeks. i've let him be completely in charge, and he's taking advantage of it. the feeling of being restricted like this, of being dream's little slut, his little sex slave, turns me on like crazy. i bet i could climax from just the thought alone.

only a few minutes have passed, yet he's already going balls deep into me. his left hand remains on the collar, while his right reaches for the polaroid camera laying next to us. so this is where our photoshoot continues, huh.

he points it at me, steadying himself to get a good picture. i close my eyes again as he keeps on pounding me into the mattress. the flash makes the darkness go red for a while. i hear the picture printing out amidst sounds of our skin slapping together.

"look at me, angel," he delicately requests, gripping the metal chain to gain control over my head movements. the nickname - despite the overwhelming emotions flooding my mind, and the intense stimulation i'm experiencing - has my heart skipping beats. i'm an angel. i'm his angel. i feel wanted, i feel beautiful and loved. my cheeks have taken on all different shades of red and pink.

i open my eyes just like he told me to. they're probably shiny from the tears. he snaps another photo, and this time i get to see the camera print out a white sheet of film. he lays it aside while it develops. after one more shot of my dainty hands cuffed and hopelessly searching for escape, he puts it away. he's trembling too much, succumbing to the gratification himself.

loud moans pour out of me as he abuses my prostate, fucking my literal brains out. my body prays for forgiveness, nails clawing at the pillowcase for relief. he's got me fucked up, got me flying with the birds in the sky. i see stars dancing across the room, and across the darkness beneath my eyelids.

his lips meet mine again. our tongues intertwine. he tastes like nothing at all now. i can't focus on a single thing. the kiss is intense but sloppy. strings of saliva connect us even after we've pulled away.

the air is so hot and humid. only the sounds of sex interrupt the silence.

dream? i want to love you like this forever. i want to lay here, dreaming with you until i can't anymore. no one has ever made me feel the way you do. stay with me. fuck me until we're both passed out. until we're gone.

warm lips gently kiss the back of my neck, over and over. the contact gives me goosebumps, and butterflies tickle my insides. strong, protecting arms are wrapped around my waist from behind, holding me close. his heat paired with my state of postorgasmic bliss makes me sleepy. i yawn contently, relaxing into the satin sheets.

"shower?" dream mumbles against my skin.

"let me sleep," i whine, twisting around.

"we smell awful honey. it'll be refreshing, i promise."

"mm..."

he flips me around so that we're facing each other. when he spots my tired expression he shines up into a smile. i can almost see the hearts in his beautiful eyes.

"i'll wash you, okay? i'll shampoo your hair, scrub your body, give you lots of kisses.. that sound good?"

"fine," i giggle, sitting up with a groan.

he helps pull me out of bed, steadying me as i put weight on my weak legs. i'm already sore from our earlier antics. will i ever be able to walk properly again?

"come here," he says, taking my hand and leading me out into the hallway. now that i'm not being seduced i can observe bits and pieces of his apartment a little better. we walk past doors to different rooms, probably closets and work rooms if i know dream right. on the walls are paintings of landscapes and animals, as well as pinned up polaroids and other framed photos. not surprising. he sure likes his visuals.

the bathroom is just across the hallway to the left. he opens the door, hitting the light switch as we make our way inside. the room bathes in the sharp light, revealing polished white tiles covering the floor and walls, and a huge mirror hanging over the marble sink. anyone could tell this guy has money. there's no way this place was cheap.

we get into the cramped space together. dream keeps his hand on my shoulder as the water starts flowing from above. it's cold in the beginning but heats up pretty quickly. i let it graze my hair and run down my skin. dream's light curls gradually darken and stick to his forehead. i've never seen his hair this straight before. it's actually decently long when it's weighed down by a liquid.

when we're wet enough he switches it off and gets to washing the bird's nest i've got going on. his shampoo is candy scented. i'll smell like his shampoo after this. i'll smell like him. his fingertips massage my scalp with care and affection. i lean into the soft touch, closing my eyes to enjoy the ethereal moment.

"god you're gorgeous," he breathes.

the compliment snaps me out of my trance. i blush awkwardly, mumbling a small 'thank you' in return. i swear, he needs to stop drowning me in kind words or i'll break.

he squeezes out more to clean his own hair. i watch him with enamored eyes as he silently rubs it in. if anyone here is gorgeous it's him. him, with his flawlessly chiseled face, sharp jawline and baby soft skin. him with his pointed nose, pretty pink lips, and perfect eyebrows.

"you look like a greek god," i point out, my hands lingering on his bare chest.

he smirks, booping my nose with bubbles before responding.

"are you saying i have a small dick?"

"wh- no! i-i didn't mean it like that-"

"how did you mean it, then?"

the water turns on again, rinsing all the white foam out of our hair. dream grips my chin, forcing me to focus on him.

"i-"

"i wanna hear it," he commands.

"you- you're so hot, and your body is like a greek statue," i stutter, "a-and, you're huge.. i couldn't take more."

without a single ounce of hesitation he kisses my lips that were already wet from the falling water. its temperature makes the air hard to breathe, but i'm too caught up in my own little world to complain. dream gets my mind cloudy, and just as fogged up as the glass door of the shower. i can feel the hints of stubble growing on his face as we make out for probably the tenth time today.

"that's very sweet of you," he chuckles after we've pulled away.

"yeah, whatever."

the room goes silent when he turns the shower handle again. soap time. i let him clean me just like he wanted to. he stands behind me, starting with my shoulders and working his way down my back. it feels so nice that i might fall asleep on the spot. he takes several minutes to scrub me, putting such love and care into every part of my body. i've never been treated like this before, never been so spoiled. what does dream see in me, that could make him want to babysit me so lovingly?

when we're both squeaky clean he gets a towel to dry us off. because of course he's drying me off too, i don't have to lift a finger. he cups my cheeks through the material, patting the stray drops away.

"you're like a little duckling right now," he wheezes, "you're my little duckling."

"shut up, dream," i giggle, breaking our eye contact.

i get a peck on the tip of my nose for that.

just as he's about to fully drag me out of the rectangular box i stop him.

"uhm, can i borrow a razor? i need to shave."

"huh? i haven't seen a single hair on your body." he states.

"well i have."

"okay, then.. there should be spare ones in the cupboard under the sink. you can take the robe that's hanging over there when you're done."

he points towards the plain white garment, probably quite a bit too long for me.

"thank you," i smile, hugging him one last time before he steps out of the bathroom to go get dressed.

i feel like fainting from the overdose of elation. my reflection in the mirror stares back at me. pale, with wet hair still glued to my forehead. the only difference now is the multiple hickeys scattered along my neck and my collarbones. there's got to be at least half a dozen decorating the otherwise spot-free skin.

i love them.

i step out into the big living room, barefoot and only clad in the white robe dream offered me earlier. a leather couch stands in the middle of the room in front of a huge flat screen tv. in the corner is a wooden cupboard with glass out front so you can see all the items on display. it holds antique looking alcohol bottles, as well as pocket watches and other valuables. the objects in there alone are probably worth more than my apartment and my paycheck put together.

but the windows covering the walls of the living room from floor to ceiling are probably what amaze me the most. they allow for a great amount of natural light to shine in. and the view. don't even get me started on the view. we're situated quite high up in the building, so on any sunny day you could see really far. the nicest parts of the city stretch for miles ahead, gifting the residents with a breathtaking landscape to look out over.

though dream is nowhere to be found. i say his name a few times as i walk around the apartment searching. it feels wrong to snoop inside his private rooms, so i only knock on the doors. no response. confused, i limp back into the living room again. did he leave? why would he leave? maybe he just went grocery shopping or something. but surely he'd text me so i know? i should call him.

my phone is probably still in my pant pocket. and if i remember it correctly, my pants are most likely still on the bedroom floor. i'm just about to go get them when i notice that the balcony door is slightly open. right, of course this place has a balcony too.

i approach it slowly, taking in my surroundings as i step out into the fresh air. it's a fairly spacious balcony, with room for multiple garden chairs and potted plants. it's made from some kind of dark oak, with a metal railing built around the edges.

and there, on a painted bench pushed up against the wall, sits dream. he's smoking a cigarette, holding a glass of whiskey in the other hand. his emerald eyes meet my chocolate ones, his face immediately lighting up into a smile. a true, genuine one. like seeing me made his day.

seconds quietly pass. i lean against the doorway, my left hand supporting me. he eyes my body, the bruises on my neck, and my pink face. i think i can see him losing his breath. the freckles on his cheeks are even more noticeable in this warm, orange light. the sun grazes his features so wonderfully, that my breathing is lost too. swept away with the gentle breeze.

"sit with me, honey."

i make my way over to him, crawling up in his cozy lap to forget all about the world. as he exhales, i signal to him with my index finger. he carefully places his cigarette in between my lips, letting me take a long drag. the calming poison fills my lungs, and i sigh contently against his chest.

"i could stay here forever with you," he mumbles, "cheesy, i know, but.."

"i could too," i reply.

the sky is showing off a wild mix of colors where it's visible between the high rise buildings. orange, red, pink, yellow, and hints of purple. dream, as a photographer, would call this the golden hour. when even the ugliest places appear beautiful.

he sips his whiskey once more before putting the glass down on the bench beside us. to replace it, he picks up the polaroid pictures from earlier.

"i thought you'd like to see them."

he holds up the first one so i can get a clearer view. the flash makes the photo soft and blurry at the edges. it barely looks real. my eyes are closed, but my mouth hangs open. dream's hand is controlling the collar and my neck. the next photo captures me making eye contact with the camera. my brown hair is a hot mess. saliva is dripping out of the corner of my mouth, and my cheeks are puffy and flushed with salty tears. i look completely out of it. the pleasure has taken over my entire expression.

and lastly, a simple shot of my handcuffed wrists. the angry red marks made by the metal were visible already back then. the contrast between them and my normal milky skin is artsy in some messed up way.

"you- you're stunning.." dream breathes, "and so so sexy."

the compliments fuck up my heartbeat. i want to giggle, and tell him to shut up like i usually do, but something doesn't feel right. an unsettling worry plants its seed in my mind. the roots hurt my brain.

"how many people have you slept with?" i blurt out.

it's jealousy. jealousy is taking over. i know that dream is a... charmer, if anything. in high school he'd be labelled a fuckboy. a player. but i want him for myself. i'm not sharing my dream with anyone else. i've become too attached for that.

it only gets worse when he doesn't respond straight away. moments pass. my hands are almost starting to shake.

"since i met you? none," he reassures me, sniffing, "i couldn't do that to you."

that makes me smile a little, relief washing the anxiety out to sea. while resting his head on top of mine, he snuffles again.

"allergies?" i ask.

"yeah, they're kicking my ass."

the change of topic is only a measly distraction from the question that's been burning in the back of my mind for way too long now. i think dream is taking notice of my worry. his hand loosens the knot on the robe slightly, granting him access to my bare skin underneath. he feels it gently with his fingers. it makes me shiver.

our lips are so close. the following kiss is inevitable. he tastes like sweet pears and menthol parliaments. the whiskey burns on my tongue. it's so slow and delicate that i melt. i wish it never had to end.

"so, what are we?"

my voice is shaky when i speak.

he hums.

"whatever you want us to be."

i kiss him again. quick, but passionate.

"i want to be yours. for real."

"then you're mine. for real," he chuckles.

"but i have to cover these up before we start!"

"don't worry about it baby, they'll look amazing on camera."

dream runs his fingers along the hickeys on my neck and collarbones. they're almost more noticeable today. before i can start complaining again he sucks on another, unmarked spot, using his teeth to bite it and amplify the sensation.

"everyone will know that you're mine.."

his low whisper has me trembling. we've really only been official for one day, yet he's already being so possessive. i like it. perhaps a little too much.

i'm... very sexually attracted to him, if i should be honest. no one has ever made me horny like this before. sure, i was never the most innocent person, but this is on another level. my entire body tingles when he does simple things, like holding my hand or even just looking at me. and the way he speaks to me.. it's too much. i'm lucky dream is someone who can easily match - or even one up - my abnormally high sex drive.

"now sit still like a good boy and we'll get on with it," he orders, tucking a few strands of hair behind my ear.

these angel wings are itchy, but at least the lingerie is pretty. white, with small bows as decor. dream kept insisting i wear this outfit today, since i'm 'angelic'. he's so sweet, and i wasn't totally against the idea. so here we are.

this time i get to sit among bedsheets and pillows, just as colorless as the lingerie. i don't know if the props are supposed to symbolize something dirty. knowing dream, they probably are. the sheets, like i'm in a bed, my purple bruises.. yeah, anyone would get the point.

i wonder if these will be published. not that i'd mind. my dignity has already been defenestrated, and this could make me good money after all. what would carlos say if he saw the pictures printed in a magazine? would he be proud? or confused? does the company even allow shoots this obviously sexual? i don't know anymore.

i look into the camera with innocent eyes and parted lips. dream tells me exactly what to do, as usual. my fingertips graze the marks on my pale skin, they touch the fabric under me and the fluffy pillows by my side. i lay down on my stomach, supported by one of them as dream adjusts the shutter speed. the silence is somehow calming. conversation isn't needed to make me feel comfortable. the presence of my lover is enough.

"on your side now, curled up.. beautiful. just like that."

his ability to stay professional during these shoots is truly admirable. deep down i know he's fighting the urge to slam me onto a table and do major stuff to me, first chance he gets. that thought almost makes me giggle in the middle of a pose.

"you're doing amazing sweetie," he praises after a while.

i have to physically strain to stop a big grin from spreading on my face, possibly ruining a photo. the praising gets me so giddy, gets me feeling like i'm actually pretty. the session flies by with the help of his words. i barely remember posing at all.

"that's enough. i've got so much material now, you don't even understand."

dream emerges from behind the camera, offering a hand to pull me up. i gladly take it, letting him lift all my weight off the floor. he does it with ease, successfully impressing me once again.

"come here, little angel."

the pet name makes me blush like crazy. he embraces me, slowly rocking us back and forth as he inhales my scent.

"you smell like me," he chuckles, leaving careful kisses on my temple.

"spent too much time with you, i guess."

"we could never spend too much time together."

he's so warm, and his arms are so protecting. i listen to his heart steadily beat inside his chest. it lets me know that he's right here with me.

"mhh, i love your hugs," i say dreamily, voice muffled because of the position we're in.

"i love yours too," he mumbles, "you're so cuddly and cute."

i giggle at that response, flattered once more.

"speaking of spending time together, how does a bowling date sound?"

"a bowling date?"

"yeah, tonight? just the two of us, fucking around," he shrugs, peeking down at me.

"i mean, sure?" i huff, "it's monday night but-"

"but that has never stopped us, right?"

"i guess not."

he smiles, pecking my lips and letting his hands explore me. for a while they rest on my sensitive hips, just teasing for something more.

"d-dream, don't," i warn, "not now. you'll turn me on again."

"oh, were we supposed to save that for tonight? i'm sorry."

his smirk is smug and filled with amusement.

"okay, i'll be nice, for now. i'm texting you the address once you're off work so we can meet there, sound good?"

"yeah."

we share another kiss before ending the long embrace. his lips are smooth like silk. i don't wanna let go.

"now go get changed honey, you look real sexy in that but sadly there's a dress code."

"shut up," i snort, sticking my tongue out at him before going into the back room.

"where are the size fourteens?" dream groans, digging in messy piles of bowling shoes.
"size- what the hell?"

to be honest i've never really paid attention to the size of his feet before. fourteen is... really big. i slip on my eight and a halves, snickering as he keeps searching.

"found them!"

he whips out the right pair from the bottom of a pile, looking ecstatic as ever. his old converse come off quicker than lightning. someone's excited for knocking pins tonight.

this is really the first time i've seen dream dressed in casual clothing. he's almost hotter this way; in sweatpants, sneakers and a tank top. don't get me wrong, he's stupidly attractive in his professional workwear, but this just hits different. of course he had to pick a top that shows off his muscular arms. luckily my inevitable boners won't be visible underneath my loose-fitting pink skirt.

"i booked lane three, should be right around the corner."

"how do you know?" i ask, picking my shoes up with my left hand.

"been here a lot of times before, with friends," he explains, "it's the lane closest to the bar."

"of course you'd snatch that one."

i hit his arm lightly, rolling my eyes as we make our way past other groups of people changing shoes. some of them stare at us, but i know their curious looks are mostly directed at me, my knee socks and my cute little skirt. over the years i've learned to ignore the glares and dirty looks, but my confidence still isn't sky high. i still get anxious when parents push their kids away, or when teens whisper and laugh with their friends as i walk by. it hurts a little, honestly. it lets me know that i'm not normal. that i'm weird, and looked down upon.

dream seems to notice them too, and slips an arm around my waist to pull me closer.

"don't mind them," he says quietly, "they're just jealous of you cause you're so beautiful."

i smile, giggling slightly. another night full of compliments and flirting. i'm more than excited.

it's relatively dark inside the building, but music and colorful strobe lights make up for that. they dance across the ceiling and the walls, giving the place nightclub vibes. and the bar adds to it, too. how convenient, having a source of alcohol just behind our lane.

"so how would you rate your bowling skills?" dream wonders as he registers us on a monitor.

"i've played a few times before.." i hum, "i'd say i'm decent. what about you?"

"oh, you'll have your ass wrecked tonight. in more than one way."

boner tally: one.

"hush dream, people will hear you."

"yeah yeah, i know that turned you on baby," he teases, subtly sliding a hand under my sweater to feel my bare skin.

"dream! we can't fuck in the bowling alley!" i aggressively whisper back.

"i'm joking, i'm joking!"

he pinches my cheek, chuckling evilly.

"i find it cute how easily i turn you on, though."

"whatever," i mutter, embarrassed.

hand in hand, we walk up to number three once we're registered. our names show up on the screen above our heads. dream and george.

"alright, looks like you're going first, so i'll order some drinks for us and come back," he tells me.

"do you really wanna miss my outstanding first shot?"

"no, but we need drinks, right?"

he winks at me before turning around and heading over to the bartender.

alright dream, cocky piece of shit. i'll show you who's the boss here.

with a smirk i pick up a ball, confidently throwing it without overthinking my technique too much. it hits eight pins. that's decent. i'm definitely meeting my own, low expectations already. the two that are left are positioned right next to each other. this shouldn't be too hard.

i take aim, swinging my arm to throw the next one. it rolls along the floor, and i anxiously close my eyes as the distance decreases. knocking sounds echo inside the large room. it hit the last pins dead on. i'm a fucking master.

"woah, a spare?" dream cheers behind me, "that's pretty good. especially for a beginner like you."

"did you come here just to inflate your ego?" i taunt, fake pouting with my bottom lip, "aww, wittle dream is so self-conscious that he has to beat weak femboy george in bowling to feel better about himself, wahh waaaah.."

i burst out laughing while my victim sips his drink. after he's swallowed the liquor he snorts, desperately trying to stifle his own laughter.

"i mean, if you view it like that.."

"okay dumbass, just go now, it's your turn."

he hands me my drink, putting his own down on a round table. his fingers slot into the holes of a ball, he aims, and... a strike. of course. what else was i expecting.

"looks like i'm just a liiittle bit better than you after all."

"okay? that was literally the first attempt, but whatever you say," i huff, tasting the yellow liquid in my glass. it seems to be pressed pineapple, most likely mixed with some kind of vodka. a fancy pink umbrella is attached to it. how luxurious.

second go now. i only manage to knock down six pins this time. dream's mischevious glare burns into my back. when it's his turn, i decide to jumpscare him so he drops the ball way too early, making it go down the gutter.

"hey! that's cheating!" he exclaims, clearly upset.

"a little sabotage isn't cheating," i snicker, "and besides, don't you think i deserve a handicap since you're apparently 'soooo good'?"

"no? we're doing this fairly if you're gonna be cocky, honey."

i brush him off, preparing to throw again. before i can even choose a ball however, dream suddenly wraps his arms around me from behind. at first it startles me, but i soon lean into his warm touch.

"i love your energy so much by the way," he purrs, kissing my neck, "i love when you're happy and confident like this."

i'm blushing like crazy, spinning around to meet his gaze. for a few moments we stay like that, not uttering a single word to each other. he's so gorgeous under the flashing lights. people are probably staring again, but we couldn't care less.

"did i tell you that you look beautiful tonight?"

"you did."

"well, then i'm telling you again," he smiles, "you look beautiful tonight."

dream clumsily drops the ball and it goes.. straight down the gutter.

"okay, okay!" he slurs, "just- just one more round, a'right?"

"you just lost by like fifty points, dream," i huff, trying to keep my boyfriend steady.

"well let me actually try this time then! no f-fair..."

i firmly grab both his hands, stopping him from going anywhere.

"you're wasted baby. i think it's time to leave. you've had a little too much."

"ugh, that's boriing," he hiccups.

"i'll walk you home, that sound good?" i suggest, "you could use some sleep."

i didn't think i'd see dream this drunk, ever. he's been binge drinking the entire night, while i've only had one or two. it was entertaining at first. we laughed our asses off, stopped acting so competitive, and actually loosened up for once. but then things quickly got out of hand. dream would start sneaking away to places when i wasn't looking. and every time, he came back with more booze.

now i'm stuck with this tree of a human, branches and twigs swaying in the non-existent wind. he keeps stumbling and messing up, and i keep having to come to his rescue. i'm so scared that he'll fall and accidentally hurt himself, hit his head or something.

the roles have been reversed. it's almost funny. i'm no longer the little one, who needs to be cared for and protected. he's no longer the savior, the powerful guardian who swears to keep me safe in every situation.

"fine, whatever."

at that, i pick up our shoes and snake an arm around his waist to lead him out of the bowling alley. closing time is approaching. not many people are still actively playing, only a couple of lingering friend groups. i hope none of them spot us on the way out. it would make dream look horrible. like he's a toxic, alcoholic husband who relies on his puny wife in a skirt to bring him back home unscathed. i can already smell the prejudice in the air.

"tonight was a lot of fun though, right?" i say, putting on a fake smile to not make this awkward.

"yeah, it-it was, really fun," he chuckles, "though i didn't get to fuck you yet.."

"dream, no! in this state you'd end up fucking yourself by mistake, don't even try!"

"okay then, another time."

i help him get the bowling shoes off, and his converse back on. he rest his heavy head on my back as i lean down to tie them. how will i help this uncontrolled mess get home? the worry in me is taking over. why did i let him drink this much? why why why? it's monday too. will he even come in to work tomorrow? i doubt it. hangovers can be hell.

"let's go dumbass," i mutter when my shoes are on too. dumbass doesn't seem to mind his new name.

we get up - or i get up with a limp dream clutching onto my side - and pace towards the exit. outside the air is fresher, but colder too. i shudder in my sweater. this neighbourhood is somewhat familiar to me, and i do remember where dream's apartment is located. should be a fifteen minute walk or so.

fifteen minutes if we were both sober, that is. his weight dragging me down doesn't exactly speed us up. i have to take slow, planned steps to keep him from slipping out of my grasp. the last thing i'd want is for him to trip over the curb and fall onto the road. please let this walk be normal.

luckily we're not stumbling our way through any bad neighbourhoods. this is still a wealthy part of the city, where i'd usually feel calm. the worst that could happen is a homeless man harrassing us, and that i'm used to.

what i am definitely worried about though, is my trip home. i hate riding the metro this late, even if it's a weekday. i'm so vulnerable in there, all alone. nothing particularly bad has happened to me before, apart from the occasional slurs here and there. those are okay, as long as no one gets physical.

i'd love to get a taxi or an uber, but it's ridiculously expensive. i need to save that money for more important things. sometimes not going broke is worth the anxiety.

"you'll have a killer hangover tomorrow," i joke, attempting to brighten the mood.

"they're not that bad anyway," he yawns.

"see? you are a little sleepy after all."

"shut up.."

i kiss his cheek lovingly, holding him tighter.

"cute."

"i'm not- i'm not cute."

"yes you are. you're adorable," i explain, "though i wish you didn't have to be so drunk right now."

"wasn't me," he mumbles, head falling on my shoulder again.

we pass clubs, closed shops and cafés as well as countless skyscrapers. i wonder how long dream has been living here for. did he grow up here, or did he move here as an adult?

when i think further, i realize i still know almost nothing about him. okay, maybe 'nothing' is exaggerating, but multiple pieces of his life are yet to be discovered by me. it gives him an intriguing, mysterious aura. that same aura that reeled me in in the beginning, when we first met.

the problem now is that we're dating. and i'd like to know who it is that i'm dating. sure, the mystery keeps me hooked, and the sex and cuddles are more than enough to make me stay, but i want to know more. i want him to open up to me, fully. i wanna show him that he can trust me, since clearly he's got some trust issues, protecting his true identity like this.

the mask he's put on is coming off, slowly but surely. it's his dominant and confident, yet sweet and nurturing personality that i'm falling for, after all.

but i want to be the one who gets to learn all his secrets too, and all his insecurities and flaws. i wouldn't judge him over a single thing. nothing could make me walk away at this point.

"alright, this is it."

the tall building towers into the sky over us. i let dream stand on his own feet for a while.

"th-thank you, for tonight," he grins, reaching into his pocket for something.

"thank you too. now go up and rest please."

"wait, just-"

he gets his wallet out, digging around in it, presumably for money.

"uhh, for an uber or whatever. i want you to stay safe."

"dream, that's not uber money, that's-"

"two hundred bucks, i know. take it. you deserve it."

my fingers hesitantly take the bills from his hand.

"i'll call you," he slurs, pulling me in for a goodbye hug once i've taken his 'tip'.

"night, dream," i whisper.

without another word he lets go, turning away to leave.

the room rests in silence. my arms hug a pillow. only the lamp on my nightstand helps disperse the darkness.

it's three am, but i can't sleep. i can't stop thinking about dream. he didn't come into work today as i feared. maybe it's because no shoots were planned with me, but i doubt it. we've been working together so intensively lately.

the day passed in a kind of fog. everything that i used to call normal seemed so lame all of a sudden. coming in at nine, fixing some paperwork, then lunch, then a photoshoot in the afternoon. ever since i met dream none of my work days have looked quite like that. he spiced them up, created an extra element of fun.

it's a little silly how i've become so dependant on him. he's made me feel so many different things, that once he disappears for even a moment the emotions run out of stock. if i could choose, i'd choose to spend every second of every day together with him. to make sure he's happy, healthy and safe. yesterday's shenanigans have really kicked my protective side into action.

i turn over onto my right side, facing the dimmed light. the duvet heats my body nicely, yet i wish someone else could be here heating me up. holding me tight in his arms. telling me stupid stories until i fall asleep. kissing the back of my neck and mumbling about how pretty i am. my dream.

i'm in love, aren't i? i'm falling so hard for him. it's undeniable. this goes beyond just raw sexual attraction. it's very much romantic now as well, i've realized. he's amazing in bed but, that's not all that matters. everything outside of our bedrooms do too.

and that's what scares me. my feelings for him. i don't know if they're reciprocated. sure, we're dating. but that evening on the balcony.. he was vague. he asked me what i wanted us to be. and when i told him i wanted something more, he just accepted it right away. maybe to please me, and not hurt my feelings. who knows if he even wants a relationship. for all i know, he could be in it purely for my body.

our lack of communication is gradually showing more and more. we need to have a serious chat, it's obvious at this point. i need this anxiety to stop reproducing in my head. it's taking a toll on me.

impulsively i reach for my phone, unlocking it and going straight to dream's contact. he's definitely asleep at this hour of the night, but i need to say something. anything.

- me

can't sleep, thinking about you <3

dumb, but he deserves to know. tomorrow i'll fix this, for real. i'll talk to him properly, spill my concerns and true feelings. hopefully we can sort our shit out.

i'm about to turn the light off to give sleep a try again, when my phone suddenly dings.

- dream ♥

i'm thinking about you too <3

i don't even realize that i'm smiling. my heart does backflips inside my chest. there's still hope.

- me

we really need to talk tomorrow

|

there's just a lot of things i want cleared up

|

it's making me anxious

- dream ♥

of course we can talk honey

|

you can talk to me about anything

- me

thank you

|

i'll try and sleep again but it's hard when you're not here :(

- dream ♥

omw

- me

what???

|

dream i didn't mean it like that

|

dream??

- dream ♥

too late

|

there in ten

- me

you're crazy

|

dream it's three am

|

hello?????

he's crazy. he's gonna drive here, in the middle of the night, just to be with me? to get me to sleep better? how sweet. it's sweet enough to make my teeth hurt.

it's in moments like these that i'm unbelievably weak for him. they let me forget about all my worries, and all the unanswered questions.

maybe it does more harm than good, though. it distracts me from our problems for a while. they fade away like the green once fall comes, yet deep inside i know they're still there, and need to be dealt with. maybe it's a ploy created by dream to reel me further in. but he wouldn't do that, right?

why don't i trust him? has he ever done something to hurt me? no. he's always here for me. he loves to take care of me. i should stop being so suspicious. but at the same time i need answers. you'll get them tomorrow george, you'll get them tomorrow.

my thoughts shift to more positive ones. i probably look like a mess right now. dream won't mind though, especially since he's coming here just to sleep.

it's nice, being so comfortable around your lover. i could meet him with greasy, tangled hair, unshaven legs and rags for clothes and i'd still feel comfortable. i know he'd think i'm beautiful even then. switching the roles, he could show up looking like an emaciated junkie and i'd still think he's the most gorgeous thing that has ever walked upon this earth.

love is blind, as they say. and personality matters more, after all.

a notification rips me out of my thoughts again.

- dream ♥

knock knock

|

come open the door bby

i jolt up, my pulse rushing off to distant lands. on my tippy toes i hop out into the hallway, only clad in my underwear. the floor is ice cold under my feet. i can't wait to crawl back under the sheets again, dream keeping me company this time.

the front door unlocks with a click, and there he is. my favorite person in the universe. a great warmth spreads throughout my body just upon seeing him, standing there in the doorway. he smiles at me, and i smile back. after stepping in he grips my chin with his fingers, kissing me longingly. my butterflies awaken from their hibernation.

we don't exchange a single word. it's not needed. dream strips down to his boxers, leaving his wrinkled clothes on a chair. i bring him with me into bed, snuggling up to his body the second our backs hit the mattress. he smells like sweet vanilla and fresh cologne. i leave little kisses on his skin where his heart is located. it beats fast like mine.

my head remains there, listening to his heart as it eventually slows down. he pets my hair soothingly, massaging my scalp from time to time. i sigh contently, shutting my eyes and relaxing against the soft touch. it's not long until i'm drifting off into the best sleep i've had in a while.

"mmh- ahh.. f-fuck-"

he holds my hips so tight that bruises start to form. my knees are caving in under me, shaky and weak. i drool all over the sheets as slutty moans come pouring out. i beg for more, for release.

"y-you're doing amazing sweetie.." he praises.

his hand strokes me so fast that i see stars. pre cum already coats my tip. he's ruthless when he fucks me, and i love it. i love that he's in charge, i love when he does to my body whatever he pleases.

my trembling fingers grip the sheets. i tug on them hard. sweat drips down my forehead. i'm going numb.

he hits my prostate over and over, leaving me paralyzed and desperate. a strong, sudden warmth pools in my stomach. i can almost taste my climax at this point. i'm craving it, yearning for it.

"i-i'm so close... aah- d-dream, nnggh-"

the pleasure washes over me like a tsunami. i can't form coherent sentences anymore. skin slaps against skin, the sounds of our love echoing in my bedroom. the air is thick and humid. i can barely breathe.

i moan his name, scream it as i cum, staining the clean white sheets. my limbs tingle and i shiver. the pressure is gone and left is pure relief. my eyes shut as i savor those short few seconds of heaven. i can feel my heartbeat everywhere; in my fingertips, my cheeks and my legs. i'm burning up, face redder and more tear-stained than ever.

but dream doesn't stop. dream never gives me a break. he chases his orgasm for minutes, brutally abusing what's left of my insides. the overstimulation has me shaking and whimpering. tears trickle down my cheeks again. i feel so wonderfully dizzy and full, like nothing i've ever felt before.

when his panting gets heavier i know he's close. he strokes my sides, trailing his hands over my chest to make me shiver again. i sink deeper into the mattress as he loudly groans, filling me up with his warm, sticky cum. my knees finally give in at that, and i fall flat on my stomach.

"was that good?" he whispers, leaning down to hug me from behind.

"s-so good, please.."

my mind is still foggy from the climax, my body unable to move. dream senses my exhaustion, offering me a few apologetic kisses for the rough sex.

"do you have any tissues?"

"top drawer of the nightstand," i mumble, almost inaudibly.

he gets off me, reaching over to grab the packet. i turn so that i'm laying on my side, pillow hiding my flustered face.

"let me clean you baby," he purrs, approaching me with multiple tissues in hand.

his thoughtfulness fills me with joy. he always cares for me so well after we're done, every single

time. i couldn't wish for someone kinder, someone more loving than him. he very much lives up to his name in situations like these, cause he truly is a dream. a real dream boy. the type of guy everyone would thirst for, even the homophobic high school jocks.

"i'm sorry to have to be the bearer of bad news but, work starts in two hours."

"ugh, i don't wannaaa.." i whine, burying myself deeper into the pillow, "why did we fuck in the morning?"

"you were horny," he points out.

"yeah but so were you... it's your fault."

he chuckles, gently wiping away the cum that's dripped down my legs.

"not my fault that you're irresistible."

"stop with the flirting dream," i sigh, attempting to shift the conversation towards the elephant in the room.

"huh?" he wonders, laying down next to me after he's finished cleaning me up.

"i just want to- to talk. you promised me we would talk today."

"yeah, of course. about what?"

"us."

his familiar arms wrap around me, pulling me to his chest and keeping me safe there. he smells like home. he is my home.

i clear my throat nervously before i start speaking.

"i'm just.. scared i guess. i don't know how you really feel about me, and what your intentions are, and stuff. i trust you but, it makes me anxious. i feel like i don't know you that well. i'm sorry if it sounds stupid or ignorant or something. but i need to know, cause..."

i have to pause in the middle of my sentence to take a deep breath. this is it george. tell him everything.

"c-cause i've fallen for you, like really fucking hard. i think- i think i'm in love with you, for real. and it would break my heart if you didn't feel the same."

a hand cups my cheek, forcing me to look up at the man i've just confessed to. his eyes are glittering with elation, the smile on his lips only making him prettier.

"really?"

"yeah. i mean it."

he kisses me softly before replying.

"i'm in love with you too."

my breathing hitches, my heart wildly fluttering.

"and i'm so sorry i didn't tell you earlier. i've been meaning to for the longest time," he explains, looking almost ashamed, "but i guess i put it off. i'm.. a little afraid of commitment, if i should be honest. i've been cheated on in the past, i've been used for my money, and it's hurt me deeply. of course i trust you, but those things leave scars, you know? all of this has been difficult for me to process. all my feelings towards you, everything. again, i'm sorry."

i hug him tightly, drawing shapes all over the skin on his back.

"baby.." i coo, "i didn't know."

"it's alright," he assures me.

"thank you for telling me. it means a lot. shows that you do trust me."

"and about you wanting to know my intentions," he starts, locking eyes with me, "i just wanna say that... we're dating, george. you're my boyfriend. and i'm dating you because i love you. i would never ever do anything to hurt you on purpose. i know what it feels like to be cheated on, to be heartbroken, and i swear on my life that i wouldn't even think of doing that to you, ever. i'm yours. i'll stay with you 'til the end of times, okay? i'm so happy i met you, honey."

his words push me to the brink of tears.

"sorry, i'm just speechless," i sniffle.

"you don't have to say anything. you being here with me is enough."

we share a long kiss, so filled with passion that i might explode. our morning breaths aren't the nicest but none of us care. his tongue explores my mouth like it's never done it before. my fingers find their way into the silky blond hair that i've come to love so much.

i giggle happily when we pull away, cheeks tinted a light pink. i'm about to meet his lips again when a red liquid suddenly starts flowing out of his nostril.

"dream? you're bleeding," i point out.

"fuck, way to ruin the fucking moment," he mutters, sitting up, "i get nosebleeds a lot in the morning."

still naked, he slips out of bed with his hand covering his nose and his head craned up.

"i have to go sort this out. you should get up too, get ready for work."

i nod, stretching my tired limbs.

"you sure you'll be fine?"

"yeah, it's all good," he responds before heading straight to the bathroom.

the silence i'm left with is terribly boring. just another day of work ahead. but at least dream loves me. and i love him too.

"what are you working on?"

i sit down on the table beside dream's laptop, glancing at it with curious eyes. now that the studio lights aren't on i don't have to squint anymore.

"editing your photos, of course," he responds, grinning slightly.

"can i see?"

"sure."

he turns it so that it faces me fully. on the screen is an editing program with way too many tools for my brain to comprehend.

"though you don't need to be photoshopped. you're perfect just the way you are," he compliments,

"i'm only fixing the background and the lighting."

"so you're not gonna cover those hickeys?"

"obviously not. they're all pieces of art."

i blush, slapping his bicep with the back of my head and mumbling something intelligible. he only wheezes at my awkward reaction.

"i've gotten some great offers for these ones. it'll give us both a decent sum of money."

"cause you're such a great photographer," i point out.

"thank you for the compliment but, you're the one doing most of the work, sugar," he chuckles,

"you're the star of every photo. i don't think my pictures of a plain white backdrop would sell the same."

"yeah yeah, shut up, i know you think i'm pretty," i mutter, rolling my eyes.

"you are. and not only according to me."

he wraps his arms around my waist, carefully pulling me down into the chair so that i'm straddling him. our foreheads touch, our noses rubbing together. i giggle at his affection, quickly getting lost in it.

"hi baby," he purrs, voice pitched up.

my cheeks are hot and i can't stop smiling. my whole body feels warm and jittery, like the love is too much to handle. i bury my pink face in the crook of his neck, kissing it gently when he relaxes.

"aww, you're so cute when you're flustered."

"mm.." i hum against his skin, embarrassed, "what if someone walked in on us now?"

"well we'd have a lot to explain," he jokes, "they don't have policies against dating coworkers here, right?"

"don't think so."

"then we can be open about it once i get hired."

i yawn, stretching my back while still staying in his lap.

"about that, how's it going? with you getting hired and stuff?"

"i think it's going well," he shrugs, "it just seems to be taking a while. they're probably doing background checks or something."

"i can't wait," i smile, observing him with adoration glazing my eyes.

"we already work together like every day, it won't be that big of a difference."

"yeah but, you'll be in office all the time instead of just during my shoots, and you'll have set hours-"

"i know, i know," he laughs, "it's just cute that you're so excited."

"of course i am. why would i not be excited about my boyfriend getting a job at my company?" i wonder.

he places a hand behind my head, leaning in to connect our lips. the kiss is short and sweet, like a small reminder that he loves me. i catch myself melting under his soft touch, as per usual.

"i like when you call me that," he whispers when we've pulled away.

"call you what?"

"your boyfriend. lets me know i'm really yours."

i tilt my head, taking in his every feature. i'm in awe still. in awe of his beauty, with those adorable freckles sprinkled on top.

"i love you," i giggle.

"i love you too," he replies, smirking, "you want me to show you how i edit? you seem bored anyway."

"sure."

he helps me turn around so that i'm sitting steadily on his lap, facing the desk. his left hand holds my waist while the right controls the mouse.

"so right now i'm working on upping the brightness to really make you pop in the final product," he explains.

"upping it more? it's already bright as fuck."

"yes, but not white enough. i need to get rid of the yellow tones to make it perfect."

"perfectionist, huh?" i huff, leaning back against his torso.

"but that's why i'm successful," he states, stealing a peck on my cheek.

i watch him mess around with colors and tools i don't even know the name of. details of the photo subtly change to enhance my presence. my angel wings almost glitter. the shy, careful look on my face adds to the innocence, the purity of the shot.

"how come you started liking me specifically?"

"well, i asked them to bring me someone special, and they definitely did. that part was all luck. and then the second i saw you, literally the second you walked in, i fell for your looks. i mean, come on, have you ever stood in front of a mirror?"

flattered, i snort, hiding my red face in my palms. dream takes his hands off the keyboard and pokes my sides just to annoy me. i almost forget that i'm extremely ticklish. fuck. my secret is exposed.

"aww, you're ticklish?" he mocks, "that's so sweet."

his fingers dance all over my stomach, making me twist and laugh like a little girl.

"d-dream! st-stop! oh my-"

"i'm just kidding," he wheezes, "i love hearing you laugh though."

"shut up, dummy," i pout, crossing my arms.

"woah, dummy? you're so mean george!"

"i know, i almost feel bad for you."

he boops my nose before replying.

"can i finish ranting about your appearance now?"

"i guess," i shrug.

"what i wanted to say is just that... you're fucking stunning. your body is flawless, your skin is so smooth and pretty. i love the contrast with your dark hair. and your eyes? don't even get me started. they're like melted chocolate if anything. i could drown in them. so so gorgeous.."

my heart flutters like crazy.

"i've never met anyone quite like you."

i try to speak, but my voice fails me.

"you don't need to say anything baby," he states reassuringly, hugging me a little tighter.

"just- thank you," i manage to push out, "you've made me gain a lot of my confidence back, for real."

"i'm glad i can help."

outside the rain has started pouring. oh, lovely fall, with your unpredictable weather and changing colors. i'm happy that i'm indoors, with dream heating me up. i'd stay in his arms until the end of times if i could. it feels like we're inseparable. but sadly, that's never the case. i drank too much water today.

"sorry to ruin the moment and everything but, i need to go to the bathroom real quick."

"alright, i'll be here when you get back."

i set my feet on the ground, sliding off of him. he saves the picture he finished editing and begins working on the other ones from the same shoot. as i walk past the backdrop where the camera is still set up, i hum a song from my childhood. my mind is filled with happy thoughts and cute ideas after this day. i haven't felt this giddy and energetic in a long time.

just as i grab the doorhandle to get out i hear an office chair squeak. dream has gotten up and is approaching me, black suitcase in hand.

"wait, before you leave.."

"what?"

he grips my shoulder, nervously making eye contact.

"can you do me a favor?"

dream walks in after me, letting the bathroom door swing shut behind us. he sets his suitcase down on the floor, opening it and pulling out a white plastic bag. inside is a small container with a blue lid and different labels covering it.

"pee in this cup."

i furrow my eyebrows, searching for some kind of emotion in his expression. but his eyes are completely void of indication. he seems to be dead serious.

"what?" i huff, "why?"

"just- just do it. it's not a big deal right?"

"well, why do you need-"

"i'll explain later, okay?" he insists, fiddling with his sleeves.

i hesitantly take it from his hands, feeling the plastic with my fingertips.

"uhh, i... i don't know about this dream."

"come on," he begs, "for me? please?"

"i mean.. okay, i guess? but you better give me a proper explanation later," i say, still not fully convinced.

"i will, i will, don't worry."

i bite my lip, breaking our eye contact.

"alright, well... i'm only doing this because it's you."

"thank you so much george," he grins, pecking my cheek and ruffling my hair.

with a strange feeling pooling in my stomach, i slowly walk over to one of the stalls. the plain white door easily slides open, letting me into the cramped cubicle. i lock it behind me.

before i do anything drastic, i take my time to observe the container more closely. big letters on it spell out "t-cup", and underneath that the words "remove this label to view results" are printed. i vaguely recognize the object from somewhere. why would dream ask me to pee into this? to sell it on the black market, or to clone me or what? i'm confused.

after taking a deep breath i unscrew the lid, placing it on the floor. this is shady. really shady. and so dumb. why did i even agree to this again? right. because it's dream who asked me. would i piss in a random cup if a stranger came up to be and begged? no, of course i wouldn't. i only gave in because i'm in love with the man who pushed it upon me.

inside the space is a black line you're supposed to fill it to. i sigh and mentally slap myself once more before unbuttoning my pants. whatever. it's too late to turn back now.

it fills up pretty fast, so i empty the rest of my bladder in the toilet. my hand hovers over the sensor to flush it after i'm done. holding the cup carefully, i lean down to grab the lid and screw it back, securing my urine in there.

i don't want to remove the label that's covering whatever secrets are hidden underneath, even though the urge to is strong. however i do inspect the plastic container one last time, just out of curiosity. dream might be wondering why i'm taking so long at this point, but i don't care. this is important.

a few seconds and a couple of spins in my hand later, it dawns on me. my thoughts start racing. yeah. wait. right. that's it. i know where i recognize this from. i've done this before. they made me pee into one of these before i got hired. the company gave this thing to dream.

something about this doesn't sit right with me. at all.

fuck.

they're clearly careless with how they test their future employees, huh? blindly trusting them to not tamper with these cups, or fake their sample just like dream's doing right now.

anger rises in me, but worry does too. the stall door flies open.

"care to explain why you made me do your drug test?"

he flinches when i come rushing out. i'm practically fuming when i spot him nonchalantly playing with his hair, twirling it around his index finger like this is some kind of dumb joke. my tone is aggressive and questioning, though my expression is plagued by sheer disappointment.

"tell me dream," i demand, "i need an explanation."

ever since the day i met him, his confidence and intelligence has baffled me. he's never scared of voicing his opinion or talking about sensitive subjects. his broad knowledge of a long list of things always shines through. he rarely stutters, stumbles over words or overthinks his sayings. you could bring up anything, and he'd be able to carry a conversation for hours. no matter how tense, uncomfortable or threatening the situation, he always knows exactly what to say.

but for the first time ever, dream doesn't have a response. his eyes stare blankly at me, still void of emotion. i can't read him at all. the silence is unnerving.

"dream!"

"i- okay, listen..."

he clears his throat, sighing in shame before attempting to defend himself.

"i had no idea they were gonna push a piss test on me, so last weekend i.. i smoked some weed with my friends. i promise i don't do it often, it just came up and, ended up happening," he admits, shrugging, "it might've showed up on the test. i'm sorry. i just didn't want to lose this opportunity."

i roll my eyes in disbelief.

"so you-" i huff, shaking my head, "you made me fake it for you instead?"

"look, i know it's bad but, it's such a tiny, useless mistake that would fuck up this entire job offer. i'm not about to trip over the finish line now! so i just figured i'd have to do something about it, and-"

"and therefore you take advantage of your lover, who you know would do anything for you, to secure your spot? nice move dream, real nice."

"but you care about me being hired too, right? you don't want me to be turned away just because of some stupid drug test."

i step closer to him, reaching out to cup his cheek as i give my response. my voice softens significantly, completely disregarding of my intentions.

"no, dream. at this point i couldn't give less shits about if you get the job or not. all i care about is honesty. i value it highly. and right now you're disproving the loyal, honest persona you've built up. i'm disappointed. i really am. i'm almost ashamed of you."

he remains as still as a statue throughout my speech.

"and you know what? you're really lucky i love you as much as i do, otherwise we would've had worse problems. but right now i need some time alone. i'll be in the parking lot at five, after work's ended. you're picking me up and driving me back to your place. that sound good? and you better have come up with a proper apology by then."

"okay," he nods, lacking other replies.

"now take your fucking fraud and get out of here," i mutter, handing him the container.

he takes it from my grip hesitantly, slipping it back into the plastic bag where it came from. his suitcase closes up with a click, and he promptly leaves me in the bathroom without another word.

the clock on the wall strikes five, and my shift is officially ending.

guilt has plagued me ever since the bathroom incident. i feel like i went too hard on dream. now that i've had more time to think about it, the reasoning behind his actions becomes more and more logical to me. it's obvious he'd freak out upon receiving a test like that. this job offer is important to him, a crucial step in crawling out of the freelancing world. i'd panic too.

still, taking advantage of me, who he knows is loyal and vulnerable, is kind of a dickhead move. but i'll forgive him. many people would do the same. as long as he's got a fair apology, i'm fine with it. weed isn't a big deal. and so i shouldn't make it into one.

i get out of the elevator once it reaches the first floor. now, out the back door to the parking lot and into his car. if he's kept his promise to pick me up, that is. but i don't doubt he's waiting for me, he always keeps his promises.

the weather outside is nice, but fall is treading in for real now. lately it's been getting colder, and windier. my legs will start to suffer soon if i don't ditch my skirts. it makes me sad, to be honest. life without them isn't as fun.

my eyes scan the perimeter for that familiar black bmw. i walk along the wall of the office building until i find exactly what i'm looking for. a hand decorated in expensive rings waves at me from inside the vehicle, and i can feel my heart flutter like every other time i've seen him. his hair falls in curls over his forehead, and his bright eyes glitter as he gazes at me.

i skip the last few feet over to the passenger side, giddy as ever. the doors unlock with a click, allowing entry.

"hi hun, how was work?"

my body sinks down into the leather seat, relaxing as i feel that same hand brush against my cheek.

"it was alright," i shrug, "nothing eventful."

he tucks a few dark strands of hair behind my ear, smiling and leaning over to kiss me softly. i melt into it without hesitation. it makes me forget about reality for a few, peaceful seconds.

his expression has changed once i open my eyes again, to a more mellow and sympathetic one.

"i'd like to apologize for earlier," he states, "i didn't mean to use you like that. it was a shitty thing to do, i've realized that now. the fact that you even agreed to it shows me that you really are loyal, and that you'd do anything for me. i don't think you know how much i appreciate that."

he takes my hand in his, gently stroking it with his thumb as he looks me in the eyes.

"i hope you understand that i had no intention of hurting you or your trust for me. i acted impulsively, without thinking of the consequences. honesty is incredibly important to me, and i know it is to you too. i've messed up once now, and i promise i won't do it again, okay? i'll try to be as upfront with you as i can in the future."

it's like all my anxiety has been washed away with a single wave. i can't help but smile at his speech. he's really got a special way with words. it feels raw and sincere, just as i wished.

i open my arms to hug him forgivingly. his embrace is calming. everything feels right again.

"i wanna say sorry for how i acted too," i mumble into his chest, "me lashing out like that was a bit harsh. in hindsight, i could see the logic behind what you did. and even though i wouldn't have done the same, i forgive you. don't worry."

"you have nothing to be sorry for, honey. it was completely rational to react like that. i think i needed to hear it too, honestly," he chuckles, drawing shapes on my back.

a comfortable silence sets in. the traffic outside provides nothing more than muffled background noise. sounds of engines revving, car doors slamming and wheels rolling on the grey asphalt. in our own little universe they don't exist. it's just me and him, him and me.

"i love you dream," i say after a while.

"i love you too george. never wanna lose you."

he kisses me again, this time for longer. he tastes so sweet, like mint and cotton candy. it's got me mesmerized. left me with not a worry in the world. his fingers play with my hair, occasionally tugging at it.

"you're such a tease," i complain when we pause for air.

"you seem to enjoy it though."

can't deny that.

his evil tongue explores my mouth, and he palms me through my pants until i desperately moan. a string of wet saliva still connects us after we've pulled away.

"back to my place, then?" he whispers, giving me goosebumps.

i nod as he starts the car, reversing out of the parking space. my forehead rests against the cold glass window so that i can look out. people are wandering the streets. life goes on as normal. my boner isn't disappearing. everything is as it should be.

but despite that, the distant worry from earlier comes back to haunt me again. we've resolved our conflict, yet it feels like something is wrong. really wrong.

the sun shines in through the windows in the living room as i enter, clad only in a white robe. dream is already awake, sitting on the leather couch with a box in his lap. i know that box all too well by now. you could say it's his own secret photo gallery. every night he brings it out again to add new polaroids to the collection. i find it sweet, that he'd wanna save a whole bunch of pictures of me. and i find it hot that he takes them in the first place.

"morning sunshine," he greets me the moment he spots me limping over.

"good morning, baby."

"you sound so cute when you say baby."

"shut up," i mutter to his amusement.

i take a seat next to him, peeking at the polaroids he's holding. it's the ones from a few nights ago, when he hogtied me so hard that faint bruises still decorate my wrists and ankles. my ass hurts just looking at them. but it sure felt good.

"horny this early, huh?" i tease, poking his side.

"no, just.. admiring the art," he chuckles, wrapping an arm around my shoulders and pulling me closer.

"let's only do that one once a month, please."

"what? can't handle more pain?"

i roll my eyes, letting my head fall back.

"i'm just kidding," he wheezes upon seeing my reaction, "what would i do without you, george?"

"i don't know, jack off five times a day?"

my eyes focus back on him when he doesn't respond right away. his lips are pressed into a thin line, like i've hurt his feelings but also pushed him to the brink of hysterical laughter.

"am i wrong though?" i smirk.

"i guess not."

he shoots me a goofy grin, tapping his fingers on the box.

"anyway, i'm bored, should i go make you breakfast?"

"uhh, you don't have to," i shrug.

"but i want to," he points out, "come on, wouldn't that be nice? some proper, cooked breakfast for my princess?"

"okay, sure... go ahead then."

he practically bounces up out of the couch as i say that, skipping into the connected kitchen behind me.

"god, how do you have so much energy in the morning?" i groan, stretching, "it's like.. early."

"maybe i'm just excited to make breakfast for my baby."

i smile at that.

it's been weeks since our argument, and things have been going surprisingly well, for the most part. dream did end up getting hired, with that extra help from me.

working alongside him every day is amazing. whenever we're alone and no one's looking, he steals kisses and hugs like we're high school sweethearts. i love it. not one day is boring when he's around. he treats me for dinner at fancy restaurants multiple days a week, and buys me way too many things. i don't mind at all, though i'm not used to being spoiled with dates and gifts like this.

i've been staying at his apartment a lot more too. it just seems inconvenient to travel back and forth when we're craving each other constantly anyway. and here, he's got all his fun stuff. the rope he ties me with, the collars he chokes and shocks me with, the toys he teases me with. just when i think he's run out of shit to test on me, he whips out something new. it's lovely.

but not everything's been perfect, like flowers and sunshine. because of my migration here i've noticed smaller, concerning details. things i wouldn't have noticed as an occasional visitor. for the most part i've brushed them off, thinking they're nothing important. but other things.. i've heavily questioned. silently, of course. i've been overthinking them at night, or in the shower.

like that one event the other day, when i went to use the bathroom and a mirror was laying by the sink. it was one of those detachable makeup mirrors, shaped like a square. i'd never seen it before. and it's unlike dream to leave stuff out on counters, normally he's very tidy. maybe it sounds dumb, but i ended up overthinking that one for several days. bundled on top of the other little odd events, it's created a new kind of anxiety in me.

and the drug test he made me fake. my thoughts keep drifting back to it. did he lie to me? he said he smoked weed with his friends. that's it. nothing more. just a little bit of weed. no big deal. i believed it at first, but now? now i'm not so sure anymore.

maybe i should speak up about it. actually question him for once. he's my boyfriend after all, and we've agreed to be open and upfront about our personal lives. this could be silly, unnecessary trash that i'm wasting time on, walking around worrying about without good reason. but it could also be serious problems that need attention.

whatever it is, it has to be brought up at some point. i know that. because something doesn't feel right. something is definitely off, whether it's a bad thing or not.

a sizzling sound from the kitchen brings me back to reality. the smell of eggs and bacon fills my nose. i yawn, getting up from my comfortable spot on the couch. once i've redone the knot on my robe, i approach dream who's supervising the stove as the food gets cooked.

"thank you for being my personal chef, dream," i grin, reaching up to ruffle his fluffy blond hair. "no problem, it's an honor," he jokes, turning a strip of bacon over in the frying pan.

i crack my knuckles, gazing at him with mounds of adoration.

"so, any plans for today? it's the last day of freedom before another week of work."

"i was thinking we could go check out that fair," dream suggests, "it was set up in like the park off of fifth avenue. i think it'll only be here for a couple days, might be cool to have a look."

"yeah, sure," i nod before going back to secretly admiring him.

he brings out a plate and utensils for me, placing them on the counter next to the stove. we make small talk until the food is nearly finished. my mind is almost too tired to comprehend the jokes he cracks, but that doesn't make them any less funny. dream is such a comedian at times.

in fact, dream is a lot of things. i mean, he's a talented photographer, he can play guitar and bass, he's intelligent, attractive, can cook almost anything, and is funny on top of that. it's almost like he doesn't have any flaws.

but dream is also having another nosebleed.

red comes pouring out like waterfalls.

"shit shit shit..." he gasps, scrambling to get to the sink.

his palm fills with blood on the way there.

"are you okay?" i ask, voice shaky.

"i'm- it's fine."

i hand him a bunch of paper towels to stop the flow with. he pushes them up against his nostrils, craning his head back.

with his free hand he turns the tap on, letting clear water mix with the red at the bottom of the kitchen sink.

the blood washes away down the drain, but my worries still remain.

i run my fingers through dream's silky locks, a concerned look present on my face. he's laying in bed, head propped up with pillows to lessen the blood flow. tissues are sticking out of both his nostrils. his eyes are blank and unfocused, arms crossed over his chest.

"do you want me to go get you some water?" i ask softly.

"no, i'm good."

he hasn't said much for the past few minutes. whenever i speak, he responds with something short and unspecific. it only fuels my already burning worry. i stroke his cheek with the back of my hand. he leans into the loving touch, shutting his eyes to relax.

now's my chance. i have to bring this up. i need answers, for real. i'm tired of keeping this uncertainty to myself, tired of overthinking even the smallest things at night.

"why do you get so many nosebleeds, dream?"

no reaction.

"you should see a doctor if you don't know why."

still nothing.

"actually, i can schedule a visit for you right-"

"no," he interrupts, "no. it's fine. i just get them a lot. it's different for everyone."

"so you're telling me everything's normal?" i huff, shooting him a doubting glance.

"yeah."

it hurts my heart, the fact that he refuses to share whatever's wrong. because something is wrong, i know that for sure. and i've got my suspicions, but only he can confirm them.

"dream, please.. talk to me. tell me what's actually going on."

he turns his head away.

"i deserve to know. i care about you."

"i already told you nothing's wrong. i'm fine," he hisses, avoiding eye contact.

"i'm not dumb, dream," i sigh, "i've seen the things you leave around this place. that mirror in the bathroom. random bills everywhere. you can't hide it from me forever."

he bites his lip, still staring out into the distance.

"and that drug test. you were lying. i know you were. it wasn't just weed."

"okay, yeah, it wasn't just weed, are you happy now?"

"i want to hear it," i demand, "what were you taking that you didn't want showing up on the test?"

our eyes finally meet, but only for a fraction of a second. he appears calm and controlled, but i know he's freaking out inside.

"george, i'm not an addict, okay?" he points out, "so please don't worry about that. i just- i... i do coke, recreationally. but only at parties and stuff, sometimes. or on weekends. it's not a big deal. i'm doing fine."

i frown at his confession.

"are you sure?"

"i promise."

i lift the sheets, crawling into bed with him. my arms wrap around his body, holding him tight like he's my six foot three baby.

"you need to quit."

"i know."

"i could call a rehab center if-"

"i'm not an addict, george."

"then prove it to me."

he hugs me back, nuzzling his face into my chest.

"i will."

"once you're in it's so hard to get out, okay? i don't wanna lose you."

a lump has formed in my throat. what if i lose him? i don't wanna lose him. he means too much to me. i can't lose him.

"i know," he sighs, "and i swear i won't do it again."

"good. i'll be here for you whenever you need me. you can tell me everything, and i'm not gonna judge you."

i leave featherlight kisses on his forehead. they make him giggle. it's adorable.

"thank you baby."

"no problem. you mean the world to me.."

we stay like that for a little while, just enjoying each other. his body offers me warmth and tranquility. i'm surprisingly calm considering the circumstances. my boyfriend just told me he does cocaine sometimes, and i'm not even panicking. maybe it's the relief of finally knowing what's been going on with him for weeks now.

or maybe it's the knowledge that he's not straight up abusing it. as long as i stay with him and make sure he keeps his promises, it'll all work out. he'll stop using it as a party drug, and things will go back to normal. it'll be like nothing ever happened. in a few years we can look back at this and smile, smile at his accomplishment and willpower to not spiral further.

it took a lot of convincing, but at least he did admit to it. and that alone makes me proud. it's a huge step in the right direction. now i can tailor the way i act and handle things to help him as much as possible. that, if anything, is relieving.

"let's go get these things out of your nose," i chuckle, grabbing his hand to pull him up with me.

he follows me out of the bedroom and into the brighter bathroom. i throw the soaked tissues in the trash, turning on the tap to clean off the rest of the stained blood on his skin.

"you know i can do this myself, right?" he mutters.

"oh come on, let me baby you for once."

i wet a clean tissue, wiping parts of his face with it. the frail paper tears a little because of the near-invisible stubble on his upper lip. i don't understand how it can grow out overnight like that. i have

to shave too, but like once or twice a week. not every single morning. to be honest though, a little facial hair only makes dream more attractive. if him being any more attractive is even possible.

once i've dried him off i get up on my tippy toes, planting a little kiss on his pink lips. it makes him smile. a big, genuine smile. my heart flutters when he's happy like this. i love making him happy.

"i think we should stay in today," i suggest, "rest up and cuddle."

"sounds fucking great," he agrees, cupping my cheek.

"we can watch a movie tonight, i'll make popcorn, and get snacks.."

"i thought we were supposed to be spontaneous?"

his hands find their way down to my waist, and to the knot that's keeping my robe closed.

"oh? and what does spontaneity entail?" i question, blushing.

"making you scream."

"i remember watching this movie as a kid and i just hated it."

i almost drop my popcorn on the floor.

"what? how could you hate lion king? you're a disgrace!"

he wheezes louder than ever before, pinching my cheek to annoy me more. i give him a death glare as i shove a handful of the snacks into my mouth.

"you're so cute when you're upset," he teases, kissing my temple a few times.

"no i'm not," i mutter, unable to keep the blush away from my face.

"d'awww, see? you become all flustered like this."

when he peppers me in kisses once more i can't even hold back the giggles. butterflies tickle my stomach and my lungs. i'm so in love. fuck.

his couch isn't the biggest, but three people could comfortably sit on it without touching each other. that doesn't mean we're taking advantage of the space though. i'm practically sitting on top of him, cuddling him to death. he's got his arms secured around my body, keeping me in place like i'm a toddler. his face stays nuzzled into my hair when he's not giving me random pecks.

"it's literally starting and you're not even focusing," i complain.

"i am focusing! you're just... distracting."

he winks at me like an idiot, making me roll my eyes and look away.

"you think you're so smooth."

"well clearly i'm doing something right, considering how easy it is to get into your pants," he smirks.

"dream-"

"we've talked about this honey, no more 'dream!'"

he's always so fucking smart, and it pisses me off, but in a romantic kind of way. when i first met him, i never could've guessed he'd act like this outside of work, outside of his professional persona. he's not nearly as serious or cold as he appears to be.

in fact, every day spent with him is unpredictable. it could start off being the shittiest day ever, then dream pops in out of nowhere and brightens it up until you're blinded. or he could turn what was supposed to be a cozy, calm movie night into an absolute circus. his jokes and creativity come steamrolling through. the clownery is endless.

but i think that's one of the things i love the most about him. not that i could choose one specific thing. what makes him so perfect in my eyes, is all his traits combined. literally god's gift to humanity. to me.

"ugh, can't we watch something else instead?" he whines, "this shit's like a double dose of rohypnol."

"you're clowning on my entire childhood right now," i pout, pretending to sob.

"wittle baby, haven't you grown out of diapers yet? poor thing-"

"dr- stop!"

his wheezing laugh is so contagious that i'm struggling to stay quiet. he radiates pure joy, and i'm happily bathing in it. i almost slip off of his lap when he pounds his fist against the armrest, struggling to breathe because of his own mockery.

"okay, it wasn't that funny dream."

"it was!" he snorts, "you should've seen the look on your face!"

"i just wanna watch lion king! leave me alone-"

the tv shuts off with a click.

"wh-"

dream's got the remote in his hand, finger on the power button. he evilly waves it over my head, smirking as i fail to reach it.

"turn it back on!" i exclaim, glaring at him with wild eyes.

"on one condition, sweetie," he declares, "that we watch brokeback mountain instead."

"oh my god, how gay are you?"

i groan loudly, falling back into his lap. there's no winning, ever.

"well, considering i fuck you regularly.."

"have you ever even dated a woman?"

"oh, plenty," he mumbles, sipping his wine.

"yeah? go on."

he brings me closer, petting my hair and sighing as he explains.

"most were only with me for my money or my looks, or because i could take them to high-end parties and shit. they'd get mad and whiny every single day, and all i had to do to make them shut up was push some cash in their faces. so shallow," he shrugs, "of course there were nice girls too. but i was damaged mentally from all those bad relationships so nothing held together in the end."

"i'm so sorry," i whisper.

"it's fine, i'm over it. and besides, now i've got you. you're nothing like those other bitches. you've like- you've taught me how to love again. properly. i feel safe with you."

i smile so much it hurts. the fact that i've changed his life makes me happier than anything else ever could.

"you're gonna kill me with your flattering," i giggle.

"it's true though."

he lifts my chin a little to peck my lips. it's short and sweet, but it still melts me.

"i love you so much," he breathes.

"i love you more," i shakily reply.

"impossible."

we kiss again. he tastes like fruity red wine. his hands are everywhere on my body. i can feel him grinning into it. my heart does flips inside my chest.

"so, brokeback mountain?"

"fine," i huff, sticking my tongue out at him.

"it's actually a really good movie, shut up."

i relax against him as he turns the tv back on. my left ear listens to the movie while my right listens to his heartbeat. it's rhythmical and soothing, almost like a lullaby. his fingers fiddle with my hair once again, his foot tapping against the wooden floor. he downs the rest of his glass before placing it down on the living room table.

"chill with the wine," i remind him, "that's like your fifth glass tonight."

"fifth? that's my second, dumbass," he retaliates.

"i know, i was kidding. but still, the movie's barely started yet and you're just chugging wine at this point."

our conversation dies down quickly after that. dream cuddles me for a while as we watch, but his foot tapping is only getting more intense. it annoys me who's trying to enjoy the moment.

"can you stop?" i whine.

"i need to pee, i'm sorry," he chuckles.

"you could've told me earlier."

"but you looked so peaceful in my lap, i didn't wanna disturb you."

"whatever, go piss now, pissbaby."

he looks at me like i've offended him greatly.

"excuse me? pissbaby?"

"deal with it," i taunt.

"woaah, gogy, those are big words for a little bottom like you."

"never call me that again."

i can't help but giggle as i let him stand up. he winks at me before scurrying off into the bathroom.

this is what it's supposed to feel like. the atmosphere is lighthearted and filled with stupid jokes and laughter. this is normality. the same normality that i've grown to love, the normality that i take pride in. i wish it would never have to end. i wish that we could stay here, in the same room together, forever. nothing could hurt us, or take our joy away.

it feels like everything will be alright. maybe not today, or tomorrow, but one day. one day it will be alright.

"dream! where've you been? i called you so many times i-"
"leave me alone."

he drops his coat on the doormat, stumbling past me as i speak.

"i've been worried sick!" i exclaim, my hands shaking from the anxiety, "you said you'd be home by eight, dre-"
"what- whatever," he slurs.

on his unsteady legs he rushes to the bathroom, practically falling in through the door. it's not a pretty sight. his face looks grey, his cheeks unusually sunken in. he huddles over the toilet, gagging once before throwing up what appears to be pure liquid.

"baby.."

i kneel down beside him, gripping his golden hair to keep it away. he coughs and gags and i just want to hug him. i've never seen him this vulnerable, this weak before. as i nuzzle the back of his neck i feel the cold sweat coating his skin. goosebumps have appeared all over, and his entire body shakes and trembles.

"how much did you drink?" i softly ask, rubbing his back.

he mumbles something incoherent before throwing up again. i can only stay by his side and wait it out, let it all come up. my fingers massage his scalp, as if that would help calm him down. his locks are damp and greasier than normal.

but he's still so beautiful, even while totally fucked up like this. he's gorgeous to me, even in his worst, darkest moments. and that's how i know i truly love him. that's how i know he's captured my heart.

i'm barely upset despite all of this. he comes home wasted, way later than what he promised me, and i'm not even mad. sure, the worry's been eating me up, but right now i've only got sympathy for my honey. i want to care for him, help him to bed and hold him in my arms until he passes out. i want him to be okay.

we sit there for ten more minutes in silence. he snuffles and drools, his lips chapped and swollen. tears are staining his cheeks and his eyes are red, half-lidded. i wipe his mouth and nose with some toilet paper before helping him up. it's a struggle when he's so tall and i'm much smaller, but somehow i manage to lead him back out into the hallway.

"where were you?" i ask again.
"i.. uh-"

i can feel him almost nodding off on my shoulder multiple times as we walk. he's completely out of it. how did he even manage to get home in this state? it's a mystery.

the door to the bedroom slides open when i push it. he nearly trips over his own feet again. i help him get his shoes off before he can lay down. they're dusty and the left one has a faint footprint on it, like someone's accidentally stepped on the expensive leather boot.

once they're off and spread out on the floor, dream falls backwards into the sheets. i switch on the

lights in the room to try and prevent him from falling asleep right away. i need answers first, no matter how fucked up he is.

"talk to me, dream."

i crawl over to where he's sprawled out.

"why were you out so long? why didn't you pick up the phone? why are you drunk?"

"i was.. at my ni-"

"no, you were not at your niece's fucking birthday party," i sigh, "tell me the truth."

"the truth is... the truth is that i was there, until seven, then i went to a- a party. and yeah.." he slurs, looking away.

"so you just went somewhere completely different, got wasted and didn't tell me anything?"

"y-yeah."

i bite my lip, shooting him a disappointed look.

"it's not good, baby. tomorrow's tuesday, you've got work, and yet you're still out drinking?"

"i'm sorry," he mumbles, eyelids drooping.

"please tell me you didn't take anything else," i say, voice barely above a whisper, "look me in the eyes and tell me that."

dream cranes his head up with the last of his strength, and our eyes meet. his are dark and unfocused, not beautifully bright and vibrant like they'd usually be. it's almost like i could drown in his black pupils if i looked for too long.

he maintains the contact for a few, excruciatingly long seconds before looking away again, not uttering a word. the tears threaten to spill out, but i keep my cool.

"you said you would quit.." i snivel.

"i will."

"but when? in a week? in two years? fuck-"

the first one comes trickling down my cheek, as bittersweet and sorrowful as the situation itself. my heart hurts, my whole chest does. it hurts when i see my baby like this. faded, helpless and sinking. sinking down into the swamp water, being swallowed by evil quicksand.

he brings me close to his body, holding me as tight as he can. i cry there, into his warm chest. his heartbeat is rapid and not calming like i'd wished for.

"don't cry, sweetheart.."

his fingers sloppily trail my back, up and down.

"i-i'll be fine, i swear i will stop.. swear. don't worry about me."

how could i not be worried about you, dream? you don't seem to understand how much you mean to me, how much i would give up just to be with you. just to keep you safe. you don't know how much i love you. why is it so hard to say? why is it so hard for you to understand?

i sob thinking about it. the words echo inside of my head.

i love you i love you i love you i love you i love you

i hold him like he's about to fall, like i'm about to lose him. he smells like booze and sweat and smoke, but i don't care. i don't even wrinkle my nose, or move away in disgust. because he needs me, and i need him.

it's not long until his grip on me loosens, his body relaxing into the mattress. soft snores fill the air, and at that i know he's finally passed out. i take a deep breath. things need to change. fast.

carefully i take my arms back, like a sudden movement would wake the sleeping dream up. my caution is probably useless, cause i highly doubt it would. he's far gone, tangled deep in a distant world. if that world is filled with dreams or nightmares, i could never know. but i hope that he's experiencing better things than reality can offer. maybe i'm in there. bathing him, treating him like a god.

i get off the bed, sighing. i couldn't sleep now even if i wanted to.

my phone lies quietly on the nightstand. something is pulling me towards it.

dream said he would do this on his own. dream said he isn't an addict. but despite his empty promises and weak claims, i open safari on the device. my fingers start typing.

"welcome to the aac hotline, my name is kristin, may i have your name or would you like to stay anonymous?"

"u-uhh, george," i stutter, "it's george."

kristin's voice is cheerful and confident, but soothing at the same time. she sounds like she's from the south.

"are you calling in regards of yourself or someone else, george?" she wonders.

"someone else, m-my boyfriend."

"okay, and would you like to state your boyfriend's name?"

my mind goes blank. you could hear the cogs turning inside.

"uhm, no, not now," i mumble, lacking other responses.

"alright. what state are you in?"

"new york."

"okay.."

i hear nails clashing with a computer keyboard. when she's finished typing she starts asking me questions again.

"so, could you tell me the reason you called today?"

"well, my boyfriend, he.. he told me a while ago that he does cocaine as a party drug sometimes. and he keeps insisting that he's not addicted, that he'll quit on his own... yeah. but i don't think he's telling the truth. last night he came home and he was totally wasted, he threw up and admitted to taking coke again at some party."

i swallow the lump in my throat, changing position on the bed.

"i-i'm just so worried for him. he drinks every night. not until he gets drunk but he always has a glass of whiskey or wine or something in his hand. i don't- i don't wanna lose him.."

"do you know if he keeps the drugs at home? have you seen any ziplock bags around, maybe in the trash?"

"no, i haven't."

"do you think he uses it daily?" she hums.

"i don't know," i sigh, "he's- i mean he's normal most of the time."

"try to look closely for small, physical signs that could indicate that he's under the influence, like dilated pupils, restlessness, fidgeting, and other erratic behaviors."

"he's usually energetic but, i'm pretty sure that's just his personality."

"does he sniffle a lot? that's a typical sign."

"y-yeah? i thought it was just due to allergies..."

"it could be but, in this situation it's most likely due to frequent cocaine abuse."

"okay.."

my hands are shaking. i've got trouble holding my phone up.

"now, i'd like to ask you some sensitive questions, if that's okay? you don't have to answer them if

you don't want to, it's completely optional, but it could give me a better understanding of your current situation."

"sure," i croak, mentally preparing myself.

"does this suspected addiction affect his daily life a lot? for example his performance at work, or engagement in hobbies?" kristin wonders, typing something on her computer once again.

"not really, i guess. sometimes when he's hungover at work he's kind of sluggish, but it's not that bad."

"okay. and your relationship, has it suffered because of this?"

"i-i don't know, most of the time it's just me being worried about him. we're not close to a breakup or anything."

"do you argue a lot?"

"we've never really argued," i say, thinking, "i've gotten upset with him, like last night when he came home so late, but.. nothing more really."

there's a slight pause. the empty noise echoing from the phone's speaker makes me way too anxious.

"has he.. has he ever harmed you, physically?" she utters softly, "has he hit you, or threatened you with violence?"

"no no no, not at all. as i said, we've- we've never fought before."

dream would never do that to me.

"has he ever been pushy or violent sexually? forced you to do something you didn't really want to do, or coerced you into having sex with him even when you didn't feel like it?"

"no," i answer, without hesitation.

"okay, so you are not in danger in any way, am i correct?"

"yes."

"does he put other people in danger? does he drive while under the influence, or act violently towards others?"

"not that i know of."

i patiently await yet another question, but it never comes.

"well, what do i do?" i whimper, the lump in my throat suffocating me, "c-can i get him into rehab or, or what?"

kristin masks a sigh on the other end of the line.

"to be honest with you, it might be hard," she starts, "most rehab centers and facilities are filled right now, it's a hectic time of year.."

"what? so you're telling me he can't get help?"

"no, no, don't worry, he absolutely can but, from what you're describing... it sounds like his situation isn't dire. i'm looking at the centers in new york, and they've all got waiting lists unless it's an emergency case. he's not hurting you or anyone else and his quality of life hasn't severely worsened as a result of his drug use, so he will sadly not be prioritized."

"but-"

"i'd advise him to look up the nearest facilities on our website and contact them directly."

"but he refuses to go to any sort of rehab! he just says he'll fix it on his own and that's it!"

i take a deep breath as a feeble attempt to calm myself down.

"how do i get him treated against his will?"

"i'm afraid he doesn't quite meet the requirements for forced treatment," she explains, "even if you got him arrested for possession those short term treatments might not be helpful, and i doubt you'd want to hand him over to the police anyway."

"so what you're fucking saying is that he's not sick enough yet? he hasn't ruined his life enough yet? am i supposed to just sit on my ass and watch him slowly destroy himself until he meets your stupid fucking requirements? huh? is that what you want?"

i don't care if i'm being aggressive at this point. i've had enough. this woman straight up told me there's no help for dream, unless he decides to get it himself. and dream is a stubborn soul. he won't budge. he'll never admit he's got a problem.

will i have to watch the love of my life die a slow, heart-wrenching death, succumbing to his demons? will i have to stand there on the day of his funeral, blaming myself for his demise? millions of irrational thoughts create a tornado inside of my head. it hurts. i want it to stop.

"that's not what i mean, george. try your best to communicate with him. assure him that rehab is the best option. if he doesn't accept that straight away, you could try a regular therapist first."

"you don't understand a fucking thing. you don't-"

i can't stop the tears from falling anymore.

"fuck you!" i scream before hanging up.

it's getting hard to breathe.

the door to the balcony stands ajar, and through the glass i see dream. dream in his sweatpants and loose tank top.

i woke up in cold sweat just a few minutes prior, without explanation. maybe i had a nightmare or something, though my memory was blank. i fumbled around in the dark to find my phone. realized it was five am. and shortly after i realized dream wasn't laying next to me. that definitely didn't help in calming me down.

during these past couple of days i've barely left his side. we've been glued together, almost. it's like i'm scared of what might happen once i let him go, even if it's just for a fraction of a second. it feels like he would slip right out of my grasp, and fall into a void. like the demons would eat him alive.

i've done my best in talking to him. about therapy, rehab, anything like that. but it's hard for me to articulate words, and it's hard for him to hear them. he still seems to be dead set on quitting this "small habit" of his without professional help. the mindset concerns me. it concerns me a lot.

but things seem to be moving forward, despite all my doubts. he's been more quiet lately, less energetic. it could be an indication of withdrawal. at least that's what i'm hoping it is. his increasing mood swings also point towards it. i've dealt with them well; brought him food in bed when he's been too tired to wake up properly, peppered him in kisses when he's been feeling down. things are progressing, or so it seems.

i approach the door, carefully pushing it open. the chilly october air hits me as soon as i step out onto the dark wood. i'm only wearing boxers and a random hoodie i found laying around, leaving my poor legs exposed.

dream's got a cigarette between his fingers, apparently having a morning smoke this early. he leans on the balcony's metal railing, peering out over the bustling city below. the scene is breathtaking; my baby with his back turned, standing in front of all the lit up buildings and street lights. if the roles were reversed i know he would've whipped out his camera by now.

i waltz over to him on my tippy toes, cautious not to disturb the little moment he's having. i'm sure he's heard the creaking of wood under my feet by now anyway. on the round glass table to his left lies a pack of parliaments, as well as his beloved polaroid camera. looks like he was planning on taking some photos after all.

i grab the pack to get one for myself, sticking it in between my lips before taking my spot next to him. he barely acknowledges my existence until i ask him to light it. he silently obeys, and i take a long first drag.

the stars twinkle in the pitch black sky. they're not bright and clear like the ones you'd see out in the countryside, but they're beautiful still. i sigh. nothing feels real.

"let me get a shot of you, honey."

the sound of dream's hoarse voice distracts me. he fetches the camera and backs up to get my head and shoulders perfectly in frame. i exhale, my lips slightly parted. the flash doesn't faze me. i'm used to it.

"you're so gorgeous in the moonlight.." he compliments.

i can only smile and blush. the blank photo prints out, and he leaves it to develop on the table. a cold wind sweeps past my bare legs, making me shiver. dream only takes that as a cue to hold me. his arms snake around my waist from behind, his body pressing up against mine. i close my eyes as he nuzzles my hair. his warmth is more than comforting.

without a word he rocks us softly back and forth, humming an unfamiliar melody. i can barely believe how heavenly it is. i've never heard him sing before, but i don't doubt he's talented.

the whole scene is bittersweet. his affection has buried our problems under thin layers of dirt, but they're still very much alive and clawing at their sealed coffin. it's hard to feel happy.

on one hand i do. i'm beyond satisfied with what i have, with how he's right next to me, sharing his warmth. but on the other hand a thick fog is clouding my mind, pushing the happy away. i could start crying any minute now. crying because the future is uncertain, and because i'm terrified. melancholic clouds cluster and create thunder in my head.

"my angel..." he purrs. and for a little while everything is okay again. his breath on my neck, his lips on my skin. i'm okay.

"one day we'll fly free together."

i'm not even sure i want to know what that means. he seems gone. a bit off.

"what?" i manage to say.

"i don't know, i just.. i just thought about it. i wanna be free with you."

"i'm right here."

"but we're not free."

he lets go of me, stretching his arms up into the air, cigarette hanging from his mouth. his legs take him spinning a few laps. he giggles like a little girl, he giggles almost like me.

"ohh, i looove this time of day! don't you just feel like everything's possible?"

i watch him closely, a frown spreading upon my face.

"i know you have no problem with waking up early but, you've never been a morning person, dream."

"and so what?" he huffs, "am i not allowed to enjoy the fresh morning air?"

i rest my head in my hand, elbow on the railing as i take a drag. his laughter cuts into my eardrums. it's not sweet and endearing like it'd normally be. it sickens me. fills me with dread, and with sorrow.

"come on george, cheer up!" he chants.

his hand grips mine, turning me towards him. our eyes meet. my chocolate browns, and his emerald greens. but the vibrant shade is drowned out by the dominant black of his large pupils.

"what's there to be sad about?"

his lips are so close to mine that i can almost taste him already. my brain has run out of responses. i'm left speechless. speechless, with my heart aching. i've lost him once again.

my breathing hitches when he erases the distance between us. it doesn't hitch like when he kissed me for the first time ever. it hitches because i'm scared. this is not the dream i recognize. he

appears to be manic. he's not himself.

his fingers swiftly trail down my chest and over my stomach, until they finally reach the hem of my boxers. i gasp when he tugs at them. my body jolts back, breaking the kiss.

"no, i can't do this now," i pant, "not when you're..."

dream stays silent.

"i-i can't-"

i throw him one last glance before diving for the door. my chest is tight. i need to get away.

i'm not scared of him, i'm only scared of what he becomes when he gets high. the man i so deeply love hides inside, i can see him through the fake shell the coke creates. and maybe that's what scares me the most.

i scream and twist every time he shocks me, every time the electricity rushes to my neck. it chokes me momentarily, gets my head spinning with painful pleasure. he knows i love it when he pushes that button. i love it when he treats me roughly. it makes me feel like nothing else in this world. it makes me moan and whimper and beg for hours on end.

underneath the sheets none of our problems exist. it's just the two of us, breathing the same humid air. we let our bodies do the talking. his skin is so smooth and warm when it slaps against mine. he marks my neck until it's purple, until i can't take it anymore. teeth bite at the porcelain white skin, sending shivers down my spine.

i know he's using sex to cope, and in a way i guess i am too. nothing matters when we fuck, when we're lost in each other. it makes us numb. it sends us away from reality, into a dreamlike universe where addiction and misery is no more.

just like how he's hooked on his blow, i'm hooked on him. he's my drug of choice. and i can't get enough. i wish we could stay here forever, i wish he could fuck me until the world ends. because as soon as we part, as soon as we've come down from our high, reality crashes down on me again. the weight of all the issues are too much for my shoulders to carry. my back breaks under the pressure.

his lips are wet and soft like baby skin. they bless me a hundred times over. he tastes like everything i've ever wanted, and more. my fingertips tingle when he goes deep. they grip his back in desperation, nails scattering red marks everywhere. it feels so good. i can't stay quiet, no matter how hard i try.

i cry out for him, moaning and whispering his name under my breath. it goes on until my throat is burning, and my voice grows hoarse and weak. he enjoys seeing me this small and timid, loves it when i fully submit to him. i'm letting him take immense control of me. my body is his to use as he pleases. i like being his sex toy, a brat that's got no free will. i like when he calls me names and punishes me because i've been bad.

but amidst his merciless treatment he gives me plenty of breaks. breaks filled with loving kisses and soft touches. they help me relax, offering me some time to catch my breath.

the affection reminds me that he doesn't actually think i'm a dirty slut or a nasty bitch. i'd let him degrade me any day of the week, but those moments of confirmation are relieving too. he cares about me so much, and he's not afraid to show it.

great amounts of trust and responsibility go into our relationship, to prevent misunderstandings and hard feelings. if anything went wrong and ended up hurting me i know dream would never forgive himself. my wellbeing is his top priority, even in bed when he plays with me like i'm a toy.

his rough hands grab and fondle me, but they would never hurt me on purpose. they would never hit me and create bruises on my pale skin, never slap my face like they do my ass. i always feel safe in his presence. his intentions are only good.

my eyelids flutter open and i see him towering over me. his blond curls have stuck to his forehead and his clammy skin glows in the faint light. he's even more beautiful like this, exhausted but feral. we look at each other like we're saints, his eyes could swallow me. saliva drips down my chin. his mouth is coated with it after our kisses.

he's definitely high again. his pupils don't lie. except this time he's not afraid to show it. it's like he doesn't care anymore. he doesn't care that i know. he knows that i know. and frankly, i don't care either. it doesn't matter now. nothing does. the world isn't real. it's just the two of us, floating on clouds. everything is fine.

the eye contact breaks when he hits my spot again, and i'm sent flying. my head falls back and i scream from the pleasure. his thumb rubs my tip teasingly as i leak pre cum. he's dead set on making me cum, on blessing me with the best orgasm of my life. my gratification is what he holds dearest. i adore him for that.

dream knows me inside and out, every part of me. his fingers have slid across the curves of my body so many times that you couldn't count. every inch of my skin he has touched, and he could describe me flawlessly to anyone with ease. he knows just how to turn me on and drive me wild, he knows how to make me feel like a million dollars.

i couldn't imagine exposing myself to someone else like how i've done it to him. dream is special. the second i let him touch me for the first time, was the second i let him in. into my life, into my head, to explore all of my deepest darkest secrets. he got to learn about my insecurities, my personal issues, but also about my daily routines and simpler things that i never would've shared with friends or coworkers.

seems like falling for the strange, handsome man that refused to tell me his name wasn't so bad after all. he's changed my life completely, even though we haven't known each other for long. my days don't pass in a blur anymore. they have meaning. because every morning when i wake up i know he'll be there for me.

he's like the paintbrush that's colored my dull pencil drawing. the sunset in the background is no longer greyscale, instead it's a vibrant mix of oranges and pinks that would make anyone gasp. the grass and the trees are not just faint lines, they're actually alive. green, vivid, and thriving.

he taught me many things. about love, sex, relationships, and life in general. his love for me has given me purpose. and for that, i look up to him as a kind of role model. confident, intelligent, and compassionate. i'd protect him with my life if i had to, walk to hell and back holding his hand. when i'm standing with him, nothing feels more powerful.

even now that his empire is collapsing, i'm still standing by his side. i don't regret anything. if the demons want to hunt him down and capture him, they'll have to get through me first. if the ship is sinking, i'm sinking with it. i'll drown in the cold, dark sea. and even then, i'll still not regret a thing.

his breath tickles the back of my neck as we cuddle among the sheets. my head feels empty. i've got nothing to say. though the orgasm made me ecstatic for a little while, it's waning now. my body is warm like always whenever dream's around, but on my face is nothing more than a frown.

"you didn't have to pay for a whole suite," i point out, voice low and sleepy.

"but i wanted to," he insists, "i want to enjoy life with you. i wanna make you happy. i'd give you the whole world if i could."

"mm.."

i turn around so that i'm facing him. my arms wrap around his bare shoulders as i lean up to kiss him. his tongue is slow and gentle. it's so passionate that i could cry. my lips are already swollen and bruised from our earlier antics, but that doesn't faze me. fingers run through my hair, pulling me closer. i get lost once again in his sweet affection.

our bodies are pressed together, sharing heat. they're still two separate entities, but our souls are not. they've merged together, united as one. i can feel all his pain, and he feels mine too. i sense his gloom, and he senses mine as well. we're soulmates, there's no doubt in my mind. i couldn't possibly love someone so greatly if they weren't my soulmate.

he's my all, my everything. i wish i never have to leave this bed. but most of all, i wish to spend the rest of my life with him. i want to grow old with him, see the world with him. we would travel from the long, sandy beaches of miami to the widespread taigas of northern russia, and from there to the deepest rainforests of papua new guinea. he would document everything with just polaroids. i can picture it in my mind.

but right now, that's out of the question. his soul is hurting. and it terrifies me. he needs to heal. he needs to get clean, get out of this curse he's become trapped in. i don't wanna think about what could happen otherwise. if i lost him...

if i lost him, i'd lose half my heart too. how would i live on? i wouldn't. i could never wake up in an empty bed without his warm body beside me, his hands rubbing circles on my back, his lips kissing my forehead as i contently sigh. i couldn't make it through the day without him constantly reminding me of how much he loves me.

a lump is forming in my throat, but i quickly swallow it down.

"you know what would make me really happy?" i hint.

"what?"

"if you went to rehab and got clean."

his facial expression stays the same. a lock of hair falls when he shuffles around, hiding his right eye. i softly caress his cheek, feeling his light stubble graze the back of my hand.

"i'll call someone tomorrow," he agrees.

"yeah?"

"yeah. i guess i can start at a therapist's office, right? then they can refer me to somewhere else if it's needed."

i smile. a true, genuine smile. that's a huge step forward for him. from completely denying help to at least contacting a therapist. maybe there's still hope after all.

"i'm so proud of you baby," i praise.

"whatever," he huffs, his cheeks taking on a pink tone.

he's so adorable when he blushes, when his grin just won't stop growing. his brown little freckles mix so nicely with the pink.

"no dream, it's not just whatever! it's a lot of progress. you should be proud of yourself too."

"i haven't even called them yet but, alright," he chuckles, pecking my cheek, "it's so cute that you're hyped."

"of course i am! this is just as much about my life and my future as it is about yours," i explain.

"oh, so our future?" he smirks, "what do you see in our future, then?"

i giggle, resting my forehead against his.

"i see me and you, in a beach house in bali, sipping a tequila sunrise and laughing at something dumb, just enjoying life... and i've got a diamond ring on my finger."

"you think we'll get married?" he wonders, trying to mask his excitement.

"of course," i reply.

my heart flutters when his breathing starts to hitch.

"of course we'll get married."

he rubs his nose against mine before giving it a peck. now i'm blushing too.

"and what do you see in our future?" i ask him, curious.

"hm," he hums, "i see you, naked and on your knees in a hotel jacuzzi in new york city, depththroating me under the surface like a good boy.."

"oh? and how far into the future would that be?"

"i could go and run the water right now if you want to."

"why not," i mumble, sticking my tongue out at him, "though i don't understand how you can be so horny after we just fucked for that long, but-"

"because i can't resist you."

he straddles me as i lay on my back. the evil smirk on his face alone is enough to get a reaction out of me. he places his mouth close to my ear, whispering his words to make me shiver.

"you're so sexy with your legs spread, when you're just waiting for me to fuck you senseless. and when you choke on my dick and tears run down your face... such a little slut."

he grinds himself against me until i moan.

"f-fuck-"

"it's so easy to turn you on, boo," he chuckles, "c'mere."

without a warning i get picked up bridal style, and he carries me towards the suite's bathroom. the fact that i'm already half hard again is embarrassing. i hide my flustered face in my hands.

"don't hide from me cutie, you're adorable when you're a little horny."

i scoff at his teasing tone.

"shut up, dream."

my foot kicks the kitchen counter over and over. the thumping noise has turned familiar now. it's almost comforting. distracts me from the ticking of the clock at least.

i glance at the dial for probably the hundreth time in an hour. two am. my chest is tight. please come home, please come home...

dream's first therapist appointment was scheduled for today. he left work a little earlier to get there, while i went home on my own later. he told me six. at six he would be done, he'd be on his way home again. he'd cook me dinner and talk about how it went. but now it's been eight hours.

he's not picking up the phone, not responding to any of my texts or voicemails. even though it definitely isn't the first time this has happened, i'm freaking out. i know that he's most likely at a party, drunk and fucked up although relatively safe, but nothing about that calms me down. what if he gets into a fight one day, or gets mugged, or stabbed or- anything equally terrible.

on top of my endless worries, i carry a heap of disappointment. i'm so sick of sitting up for way longer than i should, just waiting for my druggie boyfriend to come falling through the door. i'm sick of having to drag him to bed and make sure he doesn't vomit all over, or choke in the middle of the night.

as much as i love him, i can't keep doing this for much longer. it's taking a serious toll on my mental health. i feel chained to him, almost. obligated to be his caretaker, his savior. he doesn't force me to care for him, not at all, but for me it's starting to feel like a duty. a bothersome duty. i do it because he means the world to me, but in reality i miss the freedom i had before.

i miss the late nights with him, when we would eat at fancy restaurants or watch three movies in a row. we were happy together. we'd smile, laugh and joke together. now nothing is happy. every day consists of dream struggling with even the most basic tasks, hungover or high or drunk or god-knows-what. his misery infects me fast. my heart breaks when i see him suffer. it's all too much for me.

a faint noise from outside suddenly wakes me from my thoughts. i'm off the barstool not even a second later to investigate. keys unlock the front door with a click. my pulse is racing.

"dream..."

i don't even have the energy to shout at him. he looks a mess, as expected. his tie is loose and his shirt wrinkled. the golden blond locks that i adore are damp and tangled. he drops his suitcase on the floor and it flies open. i hear him curse under his breath.

"where have you been?"

my voice is unintentionally soft and empathetic. dream ignores me completely, trudging out into the living room on his unsteady legs. he mutters something unintelligible, hiccuping and sniffing. i reach out to grab his wrist and stop him from escaping further.

"i said, where have you-"

"none of your business," he spits.

"huh?" i huff, "actually, it's very much my business, dream. i basically live here, you're my boyfriend, i worry about you all the time! it's wednesday for fucks sake!"

he looks around the room, desperately searching for a way to shut me out. what a fucking coward. can't even talk to me and live up to his mistakes.

"and that appointment, how did that go?" i taunt, "bet you weren't even there."

"i was there! why don't you- why don't you trust me?"

"i want to trust you but it's hard when you go and do this shit several times a week! you don't even pick up the phone, you don't say anyth-"

"i was there!" he screams, cutting me off.

i start backing away, my eyes widening. he's never raised his voice at me or screamed in my face like that before. it's caught me off guard, found me in a state of vulnerability. he follows me as i continue stepping back. eventually i hit the wall. i'm trapped. he's got me cornered in the living room.

"i was there. and you know what? it was totally useless."

he towers over me with his superior height. i can smell the booze on his breath when he leans down.

"they don't know shit about me.. they don't understand a fucking thing! it's pathetic."

his eyes stare at me with menace. they look dead. it gives me shivers. his left hand is squeezing my shoulder, while the right one is wildly gesticulating as he keeps rambling.

"why would you even suggest such a stupid fucking thing?" he hisses, droplets of saliva landing on my skin.

my heart is beating in my throat and tears are threatening to spill. for the first time ever, dream scares me. i'm scared of him. i have no idea what he's capable of at this point. his drunk impulses could be unpredictable. he seems furious. i just want to run away.

"i-i'm sorry.." i whimper, my lip quivering in fear.

he moves his hand again, and i flinch, shutting my eyes. i'm prepared for the worst. i'm ready to feel a burning pain sear through my cheek. seconds pass, but it never comes.

when i finally dare looking again, dream's expression has softened significantly. a frown has spread upon his face. his hand isn't clutching onto my shoulder anymore. his eyes go blank, filling with tears as he watches me tremble under him.

"g-george, no-" he gasps.

his hand flies to his mouth, covering it in shock and shame.

"pl-please, i'm.. i'm so sorry, i'm sorry!"

he almost falls to his knees.

"i didn't mean to!"

waterfalls flood his cheeks.

"i-i'm sorry! baby-"

he stumbles over to the couch, sitting down and hiding his face in his hands as he cries.

"i'm fucking horrible, i-"

it feels like i've been stabbed. my chest is heavy and my eyes puffy. my fingertips touch the wall behind me. everything seems surreal. on one hand, i can breathe again. he didn't hurt me. but on the other hand, the pain of seeing him like this is killing me. it suffocates me, tears at me.

even when he's sitting and having a breakdown the fear is present. i was so helpless in those moments. he's strong, he could've injured me badly. and i wouldn't have stood a chance with my puny arms and legs.

but despite our hostile encounter, i find myself inching closer to that leather couch. i scurry right back to him. his sobs echo loudly in the apartment. no matter what, i can never let him go.

my finger taps his thigh to alert him of my presence. he hesitantly glances up at me as i take a seat next to him. his dark eyelashes have clumped together and his palms are wet from being used as tissues.

"baby.." he whispers upon seeing me, "please, c-come here."

his arms open and i carefully climb onto his lap to let him hold me. he hugs me like i'm a teddy bear, profusely crying into my safe shoulder.

"i-i didn't mean to- i didn't! i didn't mean to s-scare you."

i cry too, but silently.

"i would never hurt you, you know i would never-"

i don't know what to say.

"i'm- i'm so sorry, please- i'm a fucking idiot, i-i'm a loser, i don't.. i don't deserve you."

my nurturing side has won once again. the side of me that only wants to show love and affection. inside, i hate myself for crawling back to him over and over. i hate myself for letting him control me this easily. but my heart wants nothing more than to be with him, cuddle with him, kiss him and love him. and my heart always speaks louder than my brain.

"i love you george, i love you s-so much."

but i can't even bear to say it back.

all i can do is pet his hair and wait for him to calm down. sit still like a good boy while he holds me tight. it's pathetic. i'm weak and childish.

the haunting thoughts consume me. i want to relax in his arms but they don't let me. everything feels wrong. i don't know what to do, how to act, or how things will be tomorrow. will i ever be able to lock eyes with him again, and pretend like i'm fine? i'm not so sure anymore.

i'm so consumed in fact, that i don't even notice the red soaking my white t-shirt.

"how are you doing today, george?"

carlos puts away the sheets of paper in his hand, crossing his arms and leaning back in his office chair as he awaits my response.

"alright, i guess," i shrug, deciding to somewhat stick to the truth.

"i've noticed you've been looking a bit down recently, that's why i called you over."

sometimes his top notch abilities to read people are relieving, and sometimes they're just annoying. right now, it's like a mix between the two.

"yeah, it's- it's nothing work related, in case you're worried about that."

"i'd like you to tell me about it either way," he says, "if you feel comfortable with that of course. it's my job to assure that our employees are happy and healthy, whether it's determined by factors inside the workspace or not. and of course i care about you personally, too."

he smiles sympathetically in an attempt to encourage me.

"uhm, well.." i start, "there have been some things going on."

my fingers absentmindedly fiddle with my hair as a heated debate is taking place inside my head. what do i say, and what do i leave out?

"it's nothing major, really. i'm just going through some harder times, you know? happens to the best of us."

"okay, anything specific you want to bring up?"

"i don't know..."

he cranes his neck, biting his lip as if he was thinking of what questions to ask next.

"how are things with dream?"

i knew that one would come.

me and dream have been official for a while now, and i let a handful of our coworkers know once we felt comfortable being open. we were lucky to be met with congratulating words and support. carlos just smirked at us when we broke the news, and then proceeded to tell dream about how obviously in love with him i was. he 'could see it from day one' as he put it. i had to hide my red face in dream's chest.

"we're going through some rough patches," i sigh, "but it's nothing too bad. he just isn't feeling the best at the moment. family stuff, for the most part. i have to be there for him a lot."

"i see."

carlos grabs a ballpoint pen from his desk, tapping it against the wood as he ponders. how his jet black hair can be so perfectly slicked back is still a mystery to me. it's admirable, honestly.

"so you're not fighting at all? it's not relationship issues like that?"

"no no, not at all," i deny, "it's just that it hurts seeing him sad and.. weak, i guess. cause i feel his pain too, you know? maybe i'm too empathetic-"

"soulmate business, huh?" he chuckles, "i know what you mean."

a small smile forms on my lips just thinking about the man i so cheesily like to call my soulmate. hearing it from someone else validates my hopelessly romantic feelings in a way.

"yeah, he- i really think he's the love of my life."

my heart skips a beat as i say that. i giggle shamelessly, images of my favorite person clouding my mind for a little while.

"that's so sweet," he comments in awe, "i'm really happy for you guys."

i nod as a thank you before our conversation continues.

"but as a piece of advice... just because you're his significant other doesn't mean you're obligated to care for him constantly. always put yourself first, george. your own wellbeing is more important than anybody else's. has he considered talking to a professional? i think that could take some strain off of you."

"uhm, like a therapist?" i question, "he's been to one appointment."

"and how did that go?"

"i don't really know, to be honest. he's being very secretive about it, which is fine by me."

i should've been there. i should've followed him to the appointment and made sure everything went smoothly. just sitting outside and waiting while he was in there could've helped. but now it's too late. he'll never want to go back. unless things get worse. and i don't think i can handle things getting worse.

"okay," carlos nods in understanding, clearing his throat, "well, then i hope he'll improve."

the conversation dies down after that. i have no idea what to say. i want to tell him more, pour my heart out and rant about everything that's been pestering me for weeks. but revealing too much would get us both fired, and carlos reads through me so easily. i have to choose my words wisely every time i open my mouth.

just as i'm about to thank him and say my goodbyes he speaks up again.

"something else on your mind?"

i look up at the plain white ceiling, humming before making my decision.

"i'm just.. worried about him, i guess. i think he might be struggling with something else, and, i don't want him to dig a hole and fall into it, you know."

"maybe i should call him in here afterwards if he's not busy.."

"you're not a psychologist carlos," i chuckle.

"no, but i'm a great talker, you would know," he grins, "and i could recommend some good ones."

he places his elbows on the table, leaning forward slightly.

"my point is, you don't have to suffer through this with him alone. i know how much it can mess with your head. make sure he does get proper help, and if things don't work out.. consider taking a break from him. give him time to heal on his own, it could work out better than you'd think. you don't need to baby him all the time in hopes of change."

"but i want to."

"but sometimes what you want isn't what's best for you."

i bite my lip. maybe he has a point, as much as i hate to admit it. maybe dream isn't good for me when he's got these problems. maybe taking a step back would aid us both.

"thank you, carlos. you've always got the best advice."

"i know, i get that a lot," he winks, "now get out there and do your thing."

i exit his office in a different state of mind. time to find dream and give him a long, warm hug.

"have you brushed your teeth?"

"mhm.."

"washed your face?"

"yeah."

i peck him on the cheek as a reward. like one of those gold stars you'd get on your spelling test paper back in first grade.

"good job baby," i praise.

"you don't have to treat me like i'm a little kid," dream mutters.

"but i'm genuinely proud of you."

he pulls the sheets over our bodies, tiredly snuggling up to me.

"you've been clean for a whole day now," i point out, "that's amazing. you should be proud of yourself too."

"yeah whatever, that's like nothing."

"hey, it's a start at least. it'll take time, okay?"

"i know."

i nuzzle his fluffy hair, bringing him closer to me. he yawns against my bare chest. it's adorable. the optimism in me is coming back, cheering me up significantly during these rough times. dream is making another attempt at getting clean on his own, and for once he seems truly determined. or seemed determined, at least. now that the withdrawals are plaguing him his will has weakened, but he's still staying on track. things are looking bright.

"how are you feelings so far?" i wonder.

"like fucking shit," he grumbles, clearly in a bad mood.

"details?"

"i don't know, everything just fucking hurts and i'm exhausted."

"yet you still keep going. that's really strong of you."

he looks up, shooting me a small, pained smile. purple eyebags are starting to appear on his face and his eyes don't glisten like they used to, yet he's so stunning to me.

"wake me up if it gets worse, okay?" i ask of him, "i don't wanna have to call an ambulance because you're having a seizure or something."

"it's not that bad honey, i promise. stimulant withdrawals don't give you seizures, stop overreacting."

"okay, but still. let me know if you start feeling nauseous or anything."

he hides his face again, leaving featherlight kisses on my skin. it tickles and i can't help but giggle. i know dream loves making me giggle. he's always finding new ways to get a reaction out of me.

"tell me a bedtime story," he suddenly mumbles.

"what?"

"yeah. any story you remember."

i take a moment to think.

"well, i have one but it's not really a happy story."

"i don't care, just tell it," he urges.

"okay.. it won't be like the original though, cause i can only remember parts."

"get on with it already, it'll help me fall asleep."

i chuckle, reaching behind me to turn the lights off.

"are you in a good position?"

"mm.."

"alright," i reply, clearing my throat before i start to retell the old story from my childhood.

"on the last evening of the year, a poor little girl came walking barefoot in the snow. the streets were terribly cold and she had lost her slippers while running across the road. she carried an old apron with packages of matches, holding one of them in her hand. not one person had bought from her that day; she hadn't earned a cent.

shivering with cold and hunger, she trudged through the snow, her feet red and blue. in her long hair snowflakes had fallen, and in all the windows lights were shining. the smell of roast goose filled the streets, for it was new year's eve."

i inhale the scent of dream's sweet shampoo, petting his soft curls before continuing.

"in the corner of two houses she sat down and drew her feet up under her. she was so cold, but didn't dare to return home. her father would surely beat her if she came home without a cent earned.

her hands were stiff with cold. just one little match could heat her up, she thought. she drew one out, and the flame burned bright. like a candle she held her hand over it, but the light seemed strange.

the girl felt as if she was sitting before a large iron stove, the fire in it burning wonderfully. she stretched her feet out to warm them too, but the little flame soon went out, the stove vanishing. only the burnt out match remained in her hand.

she lit another match against the wall behind her, its light casting a transparent veil over the bricks, allowing her to see through it into a room. on a table stood a grand new year's dinner. the roast goose suddenly came alive, jumping down from its plate and waddling towards the girl. then the match went out again."

dream sighs against my chest, letting his body relax. i can feel his every exhale, warm and slow.

"she lit another match. she was now sitting under a beautiful christmas tree, thousands of candles burning on the green branches. colored pictures like the ones in the printshops hung above her, and she tried to reach up for them, but to no avail, for the match had gone out again.

but christmas lights were now mounted higher, they appeared as bright stars in the sky to the girl. one suddenly fell down, forming a line of fire in its path. 'now someone is dying,' she thought, remembering her old grandmother's words. her grandmother was the only person who had ever loved her, and before she died she'd told the little girl that when a star fell, a soul went up to god.

she lit a match yet again, and everything became bright once more. amidst the glow stood the kind old lady, clear and shining.

'grandmother!' the child cried, 'oh, take me with you! i know you will disappear when the match is burned out. you will vanish like the warm stove, the wonderful roast goose and the beautiful big

christmas tree!'

she quickly struck the entire bundle of matches, wishing to keep her grandmother with her. they shined with a glow brighter than daylight. the lady took the little girl in her arms, and they both flew high above the earth, in brightness and in joy. up there was no hunger, no cold, and no fear.

but in the corner, leaning against the wall, sat the young girl with red cheeks and a smiling mouth, frozen to death on the last day of the old year. the new year's sun rose upon her small figure. and there the child sat, stiff and cold, but still holding the burnt bundle of matches.

'she wanted to warm herself,' people claimed. no one would ever know what beautiful things she had seen, and how happily she had gone with her old grandmother into the new year."

i kiss dream's forehead to let him know that i've finished the story. his blond locks brush against my lips and my nose. we're laying in complete darkness, with only each other to hold onto. it somehow amplifies the feeling of butterflies in my stomach. his hand is placed just over my heart, so that he can feel it beat. so he knows that i'm here.

"i love you," i remind him.

"i love you too..." he whispers before falling into a deep sleep.

i wake up in the middle of the night to melodic sounds echoing from outside. the clock on the nightstand tells me that it's half past two in the morning. i fumble around in the dark, looking for a light source. the bed feels empty, the sheets cold and abandoned.

where is dream?

when i've found the switch, allowing the room to bathe in mellow light, all my suspicions are confirmed. he's awake, and he's left the room.

clad in only my black boxer briefs, i slip out of bed to investigate. fresh air hits my bare skin, and i shiver from the contact. maybe getting a robe isn't a bad idea. i've been walking around in them a lot recently. they're practical, and fit my figure nicely. dream likes them too, because it makes it easier for him to touch me whenever he wants. i don't mind, not at all.

i get a plain white one out of the walk-in closet. it hugs my body and gifts me with heat and comfort. i tie it loosely so it'll stay on for the time being.

on my tippy toes i sneak out, pulling the doorhandle down as quietly as possible. the sound is clearer in the hallway, of notes being picked on an electric guitar. my interest is peaked.

wherever i look there's darkness. only hints of light find their way in here from the bustling city outside. the art and photos on the walls seem to stare at me as i walk past. painted landscapes warp and turn from thriving, open fields to arid graveyards. everything makes me feel uneasy. the shadow of a house plant scares me before i realize what it is.

the closer i get to the living room, the louder the notes get. i take a deep breath, peeking around the corner that separates the two spaces.

and there he sits, on the leather couch with a guitar in his lap. i can only see the back of his head and parts of his body from where i'm standing. street lights and billboards from outside allow the lamps in here to be switched off. they're shining in all different kinds of colors, illuminating the room. it looks almost surreal.

his fingers start over, and the pattern changes. i don't recognize the song, yet i get lost in the new melody. on the table in front of him is a rolled up dollar bill. only powder residue is left on the black surface. i don't even flinch. the scene feels ethereal. but i'm not dreaming, and i'm certainly not dead.

i lose my breath as he sings.

"saints protect her now,
come angels of the lord
come angels of unknown."

his voice is so smooth like honey, the words softer than a cat's fur. it's got me mesmerized. i wish he could've shown me this talent of his earlier.

i lean against the wall to keep myself steady. the furniture seems to mix together, all the lines blurring out. he is all i can see. every little movement he makes, when he cranes his head up or down or to the side, when he moves his hand along the neck of the guitar. he's the center of my focus, the center of everything.

he is my everything. but i'm too late.

hot tears trickle down my cheeks. i cry in silence as i watch him play for minutes on end. it's so beautiful that i simply can't look away. my heart hurts, as if a thousand needles have poked holes in it.

my baby. my sweet, sweet baby boy. i love him more than anything else in this cruel world. i wish i could take all his pain away, end his suffering forever. but here i stand, powerless with empty hands.

when the music finally stops i approach him where he's sitting. my feet stick to the wooden floor every time i place them down. dream doesn't react when i take a seat next to him, my face red with stained tears. all he does is blankly stare out the window, a frown glued on. it's like i don't even exist in his world.

"honey?"

my voice is weak and barely audible, but at least it's enough to grab his attention. he observes me with the same emotionless expression. his dark eyes hide a sorrow beyond my reach. they hide something broken and lost that i could never repair.

he puts the guitar down so i can crawl up into his lap. i gladly accept his offer. strong arms embrace my slim body, holding me tight. i use his shoulder as a pillow. my cheeks are wet again.

dream doesn't say a thing. we don't need to speak to understand each other. our body language is enough. our silent stares are enough. i feel every single ounce of his pain, deep in my soul. i can hear his own cry out for help.

my love heals him temporarily, but it's not enough. no matter how many kisses and hugs i give him, no matter how many times i tell him how much i love him, it'll never be enough. it's like putting band aids on a gunshot wound.

my fingers trace his features, sliding along his jawline. i just want to know that he's here with me, that he's still alive. his hand grips the knot on my robe, making it looser than it already was. i let him touch my bare skin underneath the material, let him pet it gently. my eyes fall shut as i enjoy the shivers that run down my spine.

we sit there for what feels like hours until dream shifts around. he retracts his warm hand that felt like heaven on my chest. i look up at him as his head falls back, his eyes gazing up at the ceiling.

"i just wanted to get high.. just one last time..."

both of us know that that's a lie. there's no 'one last time'. it'll keep going, and going, and going. only when his dead corpse lies in my arms will it stop.

my eyes focus back on the coffee table. i want to throw away that little ziplock bag, i want to light it on fire and watch it burn. but it doesn't matter anymore. it's pointless now, for dream has already gone to his happy place.

i can't bear to look anymore. he helps me snuggle closer to him so i don't have to. while stroking my dark brown hair, he starts to sing again. but this time, he sings for me. the same song, though slightly altered.

"saints protect him now,
come angels of the lord

come angels of unknown."

"i feel like i owe you an explanation."

his fingertips massage my scalp.

"for.. everything, i mean."

he speaks with a low voice, void of much emotion.

"you, if anyone, deserves to know."

i hum, urging him to go ahead. the lump in my throat is still choking me.

"well i- i grew up here. in a nice, big house with my parents. they were strict but kind to me. and they loved me. my childhood was great. i was never bullied, people liked me, it was just.. yeah, unproblematic in general.

but as i grew older things... changed. i became more drawn back. i was never the most social kid but, i had a decent group of friends. now however, i just started to shut myself out completely. nothing really felt fun anymore. i didn't want to get out of bed. i didn't want to eat, or speak, or anything. it got to a point where i didn't even want to wake up anymore. i just wanted to fall asleep and never open my eyes again.

and when i did have to go outside, for school and social events and stuff, i'd panic. i felt like a pathetic outcast, like everyone was staring at me and judging me. i couldn't handle it. i always asked 'why me?' my life was so perfect, yet nothing could bring me happiness. it's like i was numb to it."

i leave kisses on his neck as a distraction. it keeps the tears back for a while, both his and mine.

"it only got worse as the years passed, but over time i learned to internalize everything. i would put on a fake mask when i met people. i stopped going to therapy, it didn't work out anyway. everyone thought i was improving. but in reality my problems only cut deeper, i guess. it felt like i was going under.

then i got drunk for the first time. and the world seemed just a little better. i felt.. happy, for once. so i kept on going. for a few years i drank whenever i got the chance to. weed was a good second option. it turned into popping pills at parties every single weekend, abusing anxiety meds, getting wasted and sleeping around with whoever was up for it.

my life was a mess, but i loved it. i loved that i could finally feel normal. i loved how social i became. it distanced me from all the shit i didn't want to think about."

he pauses, biting his lips as if the next part of his story is tough to tell. sirens blare outside. they're so faint, yet i can still hear them because of how quiet the room is. dream nuzzles my hair, rocking me back and forth like i'm a toddler.

"a few weeks before my eighteenth birthday my father passed away," he sighs, "lung cancer. it hit hard. he'd been my biggest inspiration in life, especially when it came to photography. he taught me most of what i know today. he liked simplicity, just like i do. he could see the beauty even in the ugliest of things.

since i was the only child, i inherited almost all of his fortune. my mother got her share too, of course, but she wanted me to get a greater amount. i guess she believed in me, or something.

my father... had a lot more money stashed away than we thought. i was in shock when i saw the total sum. at that moment i made a decision to pick my life back up for real, and focus on a career in photography. i knew that's what he would've wanted for me.

but my addictions didn't stop haunting me just because i gained traction. my demons didn't either. coke became my new obsession instead. it made me feel like a better person. it gave me confidence and brief spurts of happiness. i could keep my shit together for the most part, even if i became more hooked with each passing day.

then.. well, i met you. and oh my god, the second you walked in through that door... i was hooked on you too. you were so perfect to me, everything about you. you were all i'd ever wanted. i played it cool, took you on that date, got to know you better, fell for your sweet personality.."

his voice breaks, his grip on me loosening. i look up at him with a stabbing pain shooting through me. he begins to sob when he sees my face, my eyes that observe him with pity.

"i-i'm sorry," he cries, "i'm so sorry-"
"for what?" i wonder.
"for- for being the world's shittiest boyfriend."
"don't say that baby, you-"

"but it's true!" i've been fucking horrible! i've treated you like shit, i- i... you don't even know the real me."
"huh?"

he wipes away his tears.

"the real me is a fucking coward. the real me is just a sad, whiny, stupid bitch who doesn't even dare to look people in the eye. the real me isn't the charming, confident guy you know. i'm worthless without the drugs. i'm a nobody. a pathetic loser. i hate the real me, i hate him so much. you'd never fall for him. you'd never love me if i- if i got sober."

his confession has my eyes watering.

"dream, i'd love you no matter-"
"you don't even know me," he hisses, "you don't know who i am."

he scoots away from me, curling up in the opposite corner of the couch like a threatened cat. it's like he doesn't want me to be close to him, like he's afraid he'll hurt me.

i feel my lip quivering, tears building up. he looks sick. he's not himself right now. i repeat those words in my head, over and over. he's not himself right now.

it scares me, the way his hands shake and tremble, how his entire body is tensed up. his breathing is shallow and quick. he looks hostile, terrified. my heart is shattering at the sight. i can't sit here anymore, i need to get away.

in a panic i search for my phone in the pockets of the robe, but of course i left it on the nightstand.

"i-i'm calling an uber," i stutter, "i'm sleeping at home tonight. sorry i- i just can't see you like this."

dream stays silent, and still. i swallow the lump in my throat before hurrying into the bedroom to

get dressed. the only clothes of mine that i can find scattered around the place is a hoodie and a bright pink skirt. for the first time ever i curse at myself for not buying more pants.

when i've gotten dressed and called for an uber i pace out into the hallway again. i want to leave, but at the same time i don't want to leave my baby here all alone. he's not in a good state. but staying will break me. i can't handle seeing him when he's so fucked up. i need space. maybe he does too.

i convince myself that it's for the best. i'll see him again tomorrow, when both of us have cleared our minds.

i'm walking back towards the living room to wish him a good night when a scraping sound starts to echo between the walls. like a card being dragged against polished wood. fearing the worst, my tired eyes carefully peek around the corner.

i watch him snort another line right off the table, to shut his emotions out. then i leave the apartment complex feeling emptier than ever.

i walk down the flight of stairs, anxiously checking my phone over and over. dream's contact stares back at me every time i glance at the screen. he texted me just minutes after i'd woken up, asking if i was up for eating brunch with him. despite the events of last night i politely accepted. how could i ever turn down an offer to be with dream?

maybe it's naive of me to think he'd want to have a serious talk. judging by his actions last night.. he isn't ready to. he opened himself up to me, showed me more flaws than ever before, and shut that door again. i'm left wondering if what he said was true.

of course i don't doubt the childhood part, but what he said after that? it haunts me. my brain's been trying to dissect it ever since, without letting me rest. i think i managed to get an hour or two of sleep, not more.

he claimed that i don't know him, or 'the real him', at least. that he's nothing like what he appears to be. that the drugs help him create distance from the part of himself that he hates so much. it's got me worried out of my mind. he's so deep in denial that i'm afraid he'll never get out.

though, it could've all been disorganized thoughts. he was coked up and reliving the darkest moments from his past. it makes sense that he'd ramble on about anything and everything, true or not. at least that's what i'd like to believe.

i'm hoping i can talk some sense into him today, make him reconsider going into to rehab and therapy. when the booze and drugs disappear, his depression and anxiety will come knocking on the door. no, they won't knock, they'll kick it down. and someone needs to be there for him in those times, someone more than just little me. i'll be by his side and love him to death, but i can't get rid of his demons.

the chilly air hits my bare legs as soon as i step outside. my skirt is a little longer today, ending just above my knees, but the pesky cold still bothers me. i won't be surprised if dream comments on the disappointing new length. the shorter the skirt, the better it is, according to him. usually i wholeheartedly agree.

i can't count the amount of times regular chores have turned into sex. one of my favorite things to do to tease him is bend over excessively whenever i'm picking stuff up or cleaning the floor. sometimes i even drop items on purpose just to do it. he knows when i'm messing with him, and he loves seeing me act up.

he'll come from behind and press himself against me, grinding until i beg him for more. i think he's fucked me on every single surface, every piece of furniture around the apartment by now. he fucked me on the kitchen counters more than once, on the couch, on the coffee table in the living room, on his desk, in the shower, up against the wall, in his office chair, on the side table in the hallway... the list goes on.

my eyes scan the immediate area for his black bmw. i spot it a few rows away, parked behind a smaller honda civic. my heart does its thing, although it's more out of nervousity this time.

i approach the passenger side and knock on the window so he can let me in. he smiles brightly at me as the doors unlock.

"good morning honey.."

as soon as i've sat down he dives in for a quick little peck. it's almost bittersweet to me.

"good morning," i reply. the smile won't quite reach my eyes.

"did you sleep well?" he wonders.

"i barely slept at all."

and when i did sleep i dreamt about your pale, lifeless body, spread out on the floor and surrounded by bottles and ziplock bags.

he doesn't respond straight away. now's my chance.

"can we- can we talk about last night?"

"what about last night?"

dream turns defensive mode on immediately.

"everything!" i exclaim, "your relapse, your confessions, all of that!"

i probably shouldn't raise my voice at him, but i can't help it. i'm no longer in control. the million questions spinning inside of my head are.

"i've already told you all about it."

"no! you just made me even more worried. what do you mean when you say that i don't know you? that you hate yourself? just- please.."

"i-"

he shrugs, avoiding my gaze.

"i don't know. can't we just go and find somewhere to eat now?"

"dream, no," i push, "i need answers, it's killing me! i just want you to be okay!"

i must seem like a clingy, controlling, pushy mess right now, but i couldn't care less. we have to clear things up, he has to get help. i can't ignore our problems forever.

"there's nothing more to be said!" he shouts back at me, starting the engine and switching from neutral.

"yes there is! you're hiding so much shit for me, it's like i don't know a damn thing about you! don't you trust me? i've said i won't judge you, yet you keep every little secret from me!"

he's about to pull out of the parking spot when our eyes meet. he looks more scared than angry if i should be honest. but his pupils, aren't they a little..?

"stop the fucking car!" i scream, scrambling to try and turn it off. in a panic i manage to pull the parking break. now we're not going anywhere.

"woah, calm down.." he mutters.

"calm down? you're high dream, you're fucking high!" i ramble, "and you drove here! you could've crashed, you could've died! you could've killed someone! you- you could've killed me if i didn't stop you!"

"well, nothing happened-"

"what do you mean, 'nothing happened?' do you not give a shit anymore? don't you care about me?"

"george, don't say that," he pouts, "of course i care about you! i love you."

"doesn't seem like it," i spit, the fury in me rising, "and don't give me those puppy eyes. just- fuck off, dream. fuck off."

i swing the door open, climbing out of his car. my head hurts from our short argument. emotions are spilling over, creating tsunamis in my mind. i can't think straight. just as i'm about to dive for the entrance to my apartment building, i'm stopped by a hand tugging at me.

"george!" he chants, "please don't leave me.."

in the blink of an eye he has me pinned against the metal, my thin wrists helpless and struggling in his grip. our lips are so close, too close.

"don't touch me!" i whimper, twisting and trembling under his control.

he lets me go after that warning, but doesn't move. i feel so small and vulnerable when he towers over me like this.

"please, just... we don't have to talk, just kiss me," he whispers, his hot breath hitting my face. it's not comforting, not sexy like usual. it only leaves me in a state of sudden panic.

and that's when i realize. i'm just one of his many drugs. i'm like a bottle to him, like just another line, another pack. i'm part of the problem. and i need to stay away.

"i'm done," i declare, pushing him away, "i'm fucking done with this."

"george-"

"i've had enough. get your shit sorted out."

this time he doesn't chase after me when i storm off. puddles of water on the ground splash when i carelessly step in them. my pulse is racing, but i pay no mind.

i throw one last glance at him over my shoulder.

you're so beautiful, i love you so much.

"i don't even know your fucking name!"

the blinds are pulled down but sunlight still shines into my bedroom in streaks. i'm not even sure what time it is anymore. could still be morning, or maybe it's past noon. it doesn't matter anyway. i've called in sick for work already.

the past week has been tough. i've tried to keep up appearances, but i see the looks carlos and my coworkers give me out of the corner of my eye. they know something's up. when i'm not constantly attached to dream, something isn't right. i've avoided him at work on purpose, cancelled all my shoots and instead focused only on boring paperwork to stay away. whenever i'm questioned, i just mumble an incoherent response back to seem busy.

i think carlos thinks dream and i have broken up. he glances at me with sympathy, that strange kind of typical post-breakup sympathy. i'm not sure i appreciate it, but as long as he doesn't confront me, it's fine.

speaking of breaking up, i'm not sure what's going on with me and dream's relationship at the moment. clearly we're not on good terms. i decline all his calls, not even bothering to read his long texts. any rational human being would've called it quits ages ago, but no matter how much i try to persuade myself, i can't do it. i can't send that text to him, i can't leave him that voicemail.

despite all we've been through, all this shit that's happened, i still love him. so, so much. i don't want to break up with him. i don't want to go without his hugs, his kisses, his love and his affection. it already hurts, how much i miss him. but deep down i know i'm not good for him.

i'm another one of his addictions. i feed the sex, drugs and money lifestyle he's got going on. he can't recover when i'm there. he has to want to recover on his own, when he's ready. there's no way for me to force him to. i've realized that now.

but what scares me the most, is that i've got no idea of what he truly thinks of me. he's said he loves me so many times, yet i can't trust those words. they could be empty words, for all i know. maybe he only dated me for my body, for sex. if it's true.. i don't know what i'd do. i'd like to strongly believe that that's not the case, but looking back at everything? maybe i was just an escape for him after all. like everything else he used.

he slept with me to distract himself from his problems, to scare his demons away. told me he loved me to keep me around. yeah, that could be it. but unless i talk to him, and unless he actually decides to tell me the truth, i may never know.

as if he could read my mind from afar, my ringtone starts playing. i don't even have to look at the screen to know it's dream. who else would call me now?

i reach over to grab it, cringing at my joints as they pop. for a few seconds i only stare at the device. the logical side of my mind tells me no, leave it. distance yourself. but the rest screams at me to pick up. i just want to talk to him, so badly. i just want to hear his voice again.

so i do it. i accept his call, putting my phone to my ear. the bedsheets have never felt heavier.

"george-" he gasps.

my heart does a flip. stop it, stop fucking fluttering.

"hey," i greet him dryly.

the line goes silent. i can hear him shuffling around, sighing, trying to figure out what to say.

"i- thank you for picking up."

i don't respond.

"uhm, this won't be a call where i'll try to explain myself or anything, i just- i wanted to talk to you. i needed to hear your voice.."

just like me, huh.

"cause i've- i've missed you so much..."

his voice breaks in the middle of the sentence. sobs echo from the speakers. my heart crumbles once again.

"i can't sleep when you're not here with me, i can't- i've been so worried," he weeps.
"don't you think i've been worried?"

i sound just as weak and insecure as him.

"i know you've been, and i get it if you're mad.. i would be too."

"dream- look," i sigh, "i'm not.. mad. or i guess i am, a little. but i'm mostly worried. i lay in bed, worrying to death every night, because i don't know if you'll still be here when i wake up the next morning. i don't know what state you'll be in, if you'll be hungover, or in a good mood, or in a horrible mood.

everything isn't about you. i've got my own mental health to care about. and all this.. it's- it's tearing me apart! i need time to heal too.

i'd love for things to go back to how they were, but... i'm not good for you, dream. not when you're in this state. and i hope you understand that yourself. things will only get worse if i- if i run back to you now."

"but i don't want you to leave me, how would i-"

"dream," i interrupt him, "not now. i'm not having this talk over the phone."

i run a hand through my unkempt hair, making up a quick plan in my head.

"listen, i'll come over after dinner tonight, and we'll settle this once and for all."

"okay.." he whispers.

"but don't get your hopes up, alright? we need a break away from each other, no matter what gets said."

he stays quiet. i take that as an agreement, even if it's against his will. i clear my throat, taking a deep breath to distract myself from the harrowing silence.

oh, how i wish he was here right now. no matter how much shit we've been through - or we'll go through in the future - i'll always crave him in the same way. that feeling i get every time i see him, the way that my heart does a leap, that my cheeks grow red and warm, and how that flame inside of me burns wild when i get to feel his soft, thermal skin. it'll never grow old. that flame will never be extinguished.

"well," he finally speaks, "see you then, i guess, b-"

"wait."

my hands feel clammy, and i have to grip my phone tighter. but i'm desperate to get it out.

"i love you dream."

"i love you too," he sniffles, "i love you so much."

then i hang up.

it's cold outside. people's faces merge together. yellow taxi cabs fly by. nothing seems to make sense in my head.

in the café on the street corner hungry college students line up. overworked businessmen tap away on their laptops. on the tables are countless cups of coffee, and the occasional bagel or sandwich. i can barely see my reflection in the glass window.

among the city's crowds i'm a nobody. i'm just another human on the go. it feels like i might be crushed by the masses. i'm small, defenceless, and fragile. i wish someone could be here to protect me.

when the lights change i hurry over the street together with everyone else. we're all just ants, scurrying away from work to home, and then back to work again the next day. i'm just a cog in this braindead machine, doing my useless little part.

i strip down to nothing, and i pose for a camera. i pose like an innocent pet, like a little child. and then my pictures get printed in art magazines and posted on simplistic websites for the whole world to see. i don't know what they want them for, or why i'm even doing this in the first place. i never thought too much about it, never questioned it.

isn't it wonderful where naivety can take you?

so so far, to places you never could've imagined. and here i am, still on the train of naivety. but it's fading, and that i'm thankful for. thank you, naivety.

this building barely feels familiar anymore. it's like a distant memory, one you can't quite get rid of. its facade is clearer than my skin, and the doors in the entrance stand tall and proud. inside, the quartz flooring never fails to amaze. large carpets are draped over certain sections, protecting from dust and dirt. the elevator button lights up in red when it's pressed.

my face in the mirror looks strangely unfamiliar. i feel my hair to see if the other me does the same. and indeed he does. both of us let out a faint sigh.

what will dream say? will he freak out, will he cry? i don't think i can handle him crying. the emotions will come flooding for us both, but i want to keep myself calm and collected. if we could break it off with a few, cold words, and then leave it at that, no tears spilled, i'd be more than satisfied. it'll hurt, but it'll be for the best.

it's not long until i'm standing outside his door, my thoughts slowly dissipating. they drift away with the wind - not that there's any wind in here - and leave my head completely empty. i debate just turning around and booking it home, but my legs are frozen in place. hesitantly, i reach out to ring the doorbell.

not many seconds pass until i face him. he looks as gorgeous as always, maybe a bit more tired, but gorgeous nonetheless. i glance upon him with adoration in my eyes. he stares back at me with the same hint of love in his expression. for a moment i almost lose my breath. focus. do what you came here to do.

he lets me step in and untie my shoes. i hang my jacket on a wooden coathanger. when our eyes meet again, we're standing closer. i swear i can feel the heat from his body. alright. just focus. i repeat it in my head, over and over so i don't forget.

since he clearly won't speak up, i'll have to do it myself.

"so, we're taking a break."

he nods.

"and we're doing this because it's the best option at this point. you will benefit from it, and i will too. but i need you to be smart about this."

i shift the weight to my other leg, giving him a stern look.

"you need to be smart if you ever want me back."

"in what way?" he asks, playing dumb.

"you already know in what way," i huff.

he fiddles with his hair, submissively turning his head.

"start taking some responsibility. you're an adult, dream."

"i will."

"and how do i know you mean it?"

"you'll just have to trust me."

"i want to trust you, and i know this is really difficult for you, but-"

our eyes meet in the middle of my sentence. his emerald greens. those beautiful orbs that reeled me in right away, the first time i saw him. they're mesmerizing, putting a spell on me all over again.

"but.." i stutter.

my tense expression softens. i shoot him a smile of pity before getting lost in the sea of green. he bites his lip. the silence is comfortable yet unnerving at the same time. i'm about to break it when his hand gently cups my cheek. my breath hitches for a moment. his thumb caresses my sensitive skin with such care, that i feel my knees start to weaken. that my eyelids flutter shut.

not a word is exchanged for a solid minute and a half. the gracious touch of his hand says more than a thousand, or even a million words. i lean into the warmth.

"it's clay," he mumbles, "my name."

he's caught me in a moment of inattention, and used it to his advantage, but i'm not upset.

"clay," i whisper, "clay..."

a small smile erases any signs of concern on my face. clay smiles back at me. clay.

"yeah," he confirms, mirroring my new emotion.

we observe each other again, for longer this time. he's even prettier when he smiles. it makes me happy. it gives me new hope, hope that maybe one day, everything will be alright after all. he will be fine. and then we can go back to our normal lives together.

but my worries have only been swept under the rug temporarily. they're starting to burn holes in the fabric, gradually ripping it apart. one question still remains unanswered as he attempts to seduce me all over again. without flinching, i push it out.

"you don't really love me, do you? you just love the way i make you feel."

he frowns. that hit something.

"no, that's not true," he says, worry washing over his voice, "george.. i'm being honest with you, okay? i've never felt this way for someone before, ever. i love you so, so much, i really mean it. please, i beg you to trust me, just this once. i know i haven't been the best boyfriend, and that i haven't always been trustworthy, but please... i-i beg you."

"how could you love me when you don't even love yourself?"

no response. but i can practically hear his thoughts racing, hear the realization.

"you need to love yourself first," i explain.

we're so close now, that i could embrace him without having to really reach out at all. he gazes down on me with understanding eyes, his hand still resting on my cheek. he's waiting for me to act. to pull away, to leave his apartment and him, alone with his aching heart in the empty hallway.

but i don't. instead i stand up on my tippy toes, connecting our lips in the softest, most bittersweet kiss of our lives. i've kissed him so many times, yet it never gets old. the same butterflies are set free in my stomach, almost like we've never done this before.

my fingers tug on his silky hair, demanding more. i need to taste him, and give my heart what it so desperately wants. his grip on me becomes stronger. he wants me.

i want him too, i crave him. just one last time.

.*~⁺+ epilogue



i see stars. they dance across my vision, dig into my skull. his teeth bite at my neck, bruising it like never before. he feels so good inside me. i moan his name. not dream, but clay. he goes deeper when i say it.

without toys, it's so raw and real. his every move makes me squirm with pleasure. it's just the two of us, just our bodies interacting and our lips clashing. he's never treated me with such careful affection during sex, but i find myself loving it. i love the way he pets my hair and my cheeks, how he fucks me slow until i'm flying.

it's in moments like these, that our souls intertwine. they merge together as one, and share their endless love for each other. when we part, they will cry out for the other, shatter and hurt for weeks. souls don't understand why leaving is necessary. they only bathe in the love and the heat of the moment, blissfully unaware of their surroundings.

my heart will weep too, but i can only ignore it. it's for the best. to cure this toxicity that's built up.

i scream when he gifts me with the gratification i've craved for. his hands touch me like i'm an angel, too pure to exist on this earth. it's all so bittersweet to me, when i taste him on my tongue. i know i will forever be his angel, no matter what happens. that knowledge calms me.

my legs lay weak against the mattress, my nails have made him bleed. his soft moans and pants drive me crazy. between my fingers his golden curls feel like silk. it's more surreal than ever. i clutch onto him for dear life, like my body doesn't want him to leave.

this time he doesn't tease me, torture me with a lack of stimulation, nothing. he gets straight to the point, giving me all that i want. we're lost in a wonderful haze together, minds fogged up and high on pleasure.

i can barely breathe the humid air. we share it thoughtfully when we're not making out. his lips are swollen and slippery from how much i've licked and kissed them, and mine are too. streaks of saliva spill down his chin. he's so sexy. i can't get enough of him. i don't want this to end. in my dreams it doesn't.

but as the warm, orange sunlight shines into his bedroom we climax together. my cum coats my stomach, and his drips out of me. i feel empty when he pulls out, both physically and mentally. he admires me with a loving but sad grin that i just can't bring myself to return.

my face gets peppered in sweet kisses as he cleans me like always, meticulously and with copious amounts of intimacy. the wet wipes are cold against my skin, but his warmth makes up for it. his free hand massages my back and my sides to relieve any pain. i sigh, relaxing while he spoils me. i'll miss this part a shit ton.

he flips me over when he's done, and we lock eyes. a chilling silence has set in. the beauty of this goodbye has faded. left is only bitter truth. clay looks sad, nervous almost. for once, he isn't high. his shell is cracking. i thought it already cracked long ago, but there turned out to be several layers.

he's so broken, so lost behind them all. i see right through his white lies now. i see the pain in his glittering green orbs.

"you need help. for real."

i want to pull him into my arms and cuddle with him for hours, but my conscience tells me no.

"okay, okay! i will get help. i promise," he replies, half-assed.

"god, this is exactly what i mean. you don't give a shit about yourself. you just want to please me."

the disappointment in my voice is apparent. i'm gonna break down crying again. welled up emotions are starting to spill over.

"i-"

he's at a loss for words, because deep inside he knows i'm right. he doesn't even want help. he's living a double life, pretending to be someone he's not. just to forget all the suffering he's been through, all the flaws that gnaw away at his mind.

dream is his character. his safety net. if anything happens, it's dream's fault. it scares me to no end.

i sit up, hopelessly blinking away my tears.

"who are you?" i scream at him, but he doesn't even flinch.

my heart wants answers. his dead stare doesn't help. he's so insecure.

"look, i know who dream is. dream is a charming, mysterious person on the outside. but dream doesn't show his flaws. inside, dream is a soulless sex addict, a drug addict. dream doesn't care about anything or anyone. dream just wants to get high. dream just wants an escape."

he gives me a look, as if he's pretending to not understand, even though i know he does. i climb out of bed, leaning down to pick up my clothes from the floor.

"but who is clay?"

my boxers slide on with ease, and my jeans too. he crawls up from under the sheets, resting his back against the headboard. his body is as perfect as ever. that tanned skin, the toned abs that i fell in love with. it's hard to look away. but he still doesn't speak.

"who are you, clay? i mean, who are you really?" i wonder, "what brand of cigarettes do you prefer? do you like your coffee with or without sugar? what do you want in life? what are your feelings?"

i pull my grey sweater over my head, fixing my hair when it's on. clay remains quiet. he knows i'm leaving, knows that it's too late. and he's crying too. his beautiful blond hair falls to his eyebrows in curls. his jawline is sharp, and his face flawlessly chiseled. those almond shaped eyes stare back at me. his bruised, wet lips shimmer in the natural light. cute brown freckles stand out in the evening's golden glow.

my beautiful boy.

"call me when you've figured that out."

and with those words, i walk out of his bedroom for the last time.

outside, the sun is setting. it's a beautiful day. birds in the trees are singing while yellow, orange, and red leaves peacefully fall from their branches.

tears spill down my cheeks like waterfalls. my heart has shattered into a million pieces. it hurts so so bad. all i see when i stumble down the sidewalk is clay. i see him in his button-up, behind the camera, taking photo after photo. i see him in a restaurant, sipping a glass of expensive red wine. i see him in the hotel lobby, paying for a suite. i see him underneath the sheets, breathing down my neck.

i'm so sorry clay, but it was for the best. i couldn't handle watching you kill yourself anymore. i love you too much for that. please get better. i believe in you. you can do it. but not when i'm there.

one day i'll kiss your lips again, one day i'll make you sweat. i'll love you just like i did before, and i'll let you love me for real. one day, once you're ready to love yourself. i promise.

luxury fades to normality, and suddenly i'm back at home. everything feels empty. did my apartment always echo like this? my cheeks are still wet.

i search my nightstand for his polaroids. even though they're many, this is only a fraction of the amount he actually took. he kept most of them at his place.

i smile a little as i look through them, one by one. i've almost forgotten how amazing he is at photography. if someone offered me a billion dollars, i still wouldn't give them away. they're too precious for that. i sigh.

it'll be alright, i'll be fine. and you will too.

no matter how much it hurts now, i know i did the right thing.

i don't love you, dream. i'm only in love with clay. whoever he is.

☆.•*:。>—————★♡★—————.•*:。☆

the end <3

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